

PREACHING AS A "THEOLOGICAL ACT": A THEOLOGY OF CONFESSION
AND ENCOUNTER BASED ON MINJUNG AND TOCHAKWHA THEOLOGIES

A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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May 1995

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This professional project, completed by

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

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ABSTRACT

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This project is an attempt to provide an appropriate theology of preaching in the Korean context. Since the radical theological movements of the 1960s such as secular theology and death-of-God theology, many new theologies have emerged. However, none of these newly emerging theologies are sufficient or proper contextual theologies for Korea. This means that an appropriate contextual theology for Korea must be the result of direct expressions and experiences of the Korean peoples' suffering, exploitation, oppression, and alienation. Thus, Kobaik kwa Mannam eui Shinhak (KM theology: the theology of confession and encounter) is suggested as an alternative theology for Korea. This theology is a vindication of not only the socio-political but also the religious-cultural dimensions of the people of Korea.

KM theology is in fact an integration and supplementation of two Korean frontier theologies: Minjung and Tochakwha theologies. The theology shares the concerns of the socio-political dimension with Minjung theology and is also concerned with communicative skills based on both Eastern and Western theology and culture. KM theology does theology based on praxis. The theology can be a possible alternative way of doing theology because it considers the Korean contextual

situation in terms of an awareness of socio-political, scientific and multireligious approaches.

As a paradigm of a theology of preaching, KM theology will result in contextual preaching. The preachers are also expected to pay attention to the Korean social and cultural context as working theologians. The preacher is not to be a spectator but a direct participant in the issues of the Korean context. Therefore, they "weep, confess, and resist" with the community and people in terms of having solidarity against the issues of historical and contextual evil.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Problem Addressed by This Project

"Preaching is a theological act!"¹ Christine M. Smith, a prominent contemporary homiletic scholar, asserts with this slogan that preaching and theology cannot exist separately. Theologian Heinrich Ott has also supported this position in Theology and Preaching. He says that "theology is preaching" and "preaching is theology."² Not only do these two prominent theologians, one a homiletic theologian, the other a systematic theologian, agree but also many other theologians such as Karl Barth, Gerhard Ebeling, and Fred B. Craddock emphasize that preaching is a theological act and point out

¹ Christine M. Smith, Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 1. "Theological act" is defined as a sense of the craft and actions of a working theologian. Every preacher should have a theological mindset regarding the complicated situations of ministry, and "this theological mind receives its impulses and pressures for theologizing." Anselm K. Min, Dialectic of Salvation (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 48. From this point of view, the preachers are called to reflect upon and struggle with ultimate religious questions of life in a concrete and specific context. This act of theologizing provides a creative and effective ministry which requires the skills of not only "the sophisticated communicator and the attentiveness of the biblical exegete" but also "the social analysis of the most discerning sociologist." Smith, 1.

² Heinrich Ott, Theology and Preaching, trans. John Riches (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 23.

that good preaching means good theological articulation.³

Even though the slogan "preaching is a theological act" has been emphasized by many eminent theologians in many different periods, seldom do preachers or theologians in the contemporary context of ministry or academia recognize the function of preaching as a theological act. In current situations, particularly in the Korean context, many preachers usually maintain that "preaching is nothing more than restating the ideas of sacred texts"⁴ and that "theology is separate from preaching."⁵ Thus, this understanding about the relationship between preaching and theology has caused the separation of preaching from theology.

This writer believes that the purpose of preaching is not just to tell literally the story of the Bible, or to interpret it in terms of an extremely rigid form of biblical fundamentalism. However, many preachers and theologians in Korea, particularly those who are charismatic preachers or

³ See Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, vol. 1/1, trans. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 82; Gerhard Ebeling, Theology and Proclamation, trans. John Riches (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 20; and Fred B. Craddock, Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 145.

⁴ Hee Cheon Park, "Seolkjojaeui Chajil Munjewha Soengkyong Oieui Charyomunje" [Qualification of preachers and preaching materials beside the Bible], in Mokhoijawa Seolkjo [Sermon and pastor], ed. Research Institute of the Korean Church, Assembly Theological Seminary (Seoul: Poongman Publishing, 1987), 214, 219, 221.

⁵ Seong Koo Chung, "Hankuk Kyohoiwa Seolkjo" [Korean Churches and preaching], in Kyohoi Paljeoneul Wihan Seolkjo Kaebal [Workshop of preaching for church development], ed. Joong Pyo Lee (Seoul: Kumran Publishing, 1993), 213.

theologians in the conservative circle, do not recognize the fact that preaching is a theological act. Rather, they have a tendency of turning to the Bible as an object of faith and utilize literal expository preaching in terms of eisegesis, proof-texting, and allegorization in preaching. They also rarely ever consider the importance of exegesis, hermeneutics, and theology for preaching because these processes are not necessary to interpret the Bible literally. In a word, their preaching concerns "then-there," but not "here-now."

From this awareness, this writer strongly sees a necessity for providing an effective methodology for articulating theology from the pulpit. Thus, this project deals with the problem and suggests a way for appropriate theological articulation from the pulpit, especially in the Korean context.

Importance of the Problem

During the last several decades, at least in the Korean context, there has not been an effective theology which also serves as an appropriate theology of preaching. Even though there have been good frontier contextual theologies, such as Minjung theology and Tochakwha theology (indigenization theology), these theologies, as Korean contextual theologies, have not contributed to a contextual theology of preaching because of their polarity. Recently while theologians in the circle of Tochakwha theology were discussing their concerns about inter-religious dialogue and indigenous types

of Christianity with an indifference toward the socio-political situation at that time, theologians of Minjung theology were concentrating their concerns only on the socio-political dimension. The exclusiveness of each group's theological concerns caused a lack of consideration of both the socio-political context as well as the pluralistic religious context in Korea. The theologians of each group have not only been prejudiced and exclusive but also have created a somewhat serious tension between the groups of theologians in terms of theological articulation. The exclusiveness of these two different theological groups has prevented them from providing good theological preaching in the context of ministry.

Presently, in order to present powerful preaching as theological acts in the Korean context, Korean preachers and theologians have begun to realize that there necessarily needs to be an alternative means of theological articulation, which tries to overcome the polarity of theologies. An alternative theological articulation is the only way of overcoming the limitation and inappropriateness of these two present forms of theological existence.

Thesis

The thesis of this project is that Kobaik kwa Mannam eui Shinhak (KM theology: the theology of confession and encounter with the Korean socio-political and religious context), as an alternative Korean contextual theology, can be an appropriate

theology of preaching for the pulpit in the Korean context of ministry. The theology of confession and encounter with the Korean context is the integration and supplementation of two frontier theologies as an alternative theology. This new articulation of theology in terms of integration and supplementation will provide an effective and creative theology of preaching as well as overcome the limitations of the polarized frontier theologies. As an integration of socio-political theology (Minjung theology) and the indigenous religious Tochakwha theology, this new type of theology can provide an appropriate model for theological articulation in preaching and can show the implications of Korean contextual preaching.

Terms Defined

Minjung

Minjung is a Korean word which is a combination of two Chinese characters, min and jung. Min means "people," and jung means "the mass." Therefore, this writer would translate minjung as "the mass of people" or just "the ordinary people," as opposed to "the extraordinary people" in the status of the people. However, when we try to find a term of the same meaning in the Bible, it may be regarded as "the people of God," in both Old and New Testaments. One famous Minjung theologian, Byung Mu Ahn, finds an identity of minjung from the concept of Apiru and Ochlos and "the people

in Galilee" in the Bible.⁶ At any rate, regarding the historical Korean contextual situation, minjung means "people who are politically oppressed, economically exploited, culturally alienated, yet have strength, beauty, and power in life in a destitute situation."⁷

Minjung Theology

Minjung theology is a Korean theology of liberation or the development of a political theology in the Korean church.

This theology is actually born out of the Korean Christian experience of the historical, political, social, and economic situations of the 1970s. However, Minjung theology is a continuation of the earlier history, which provides a historical paradigm for the contemporary contextual situation. In particular, Minjung theology is an accumulative matrix or articulation of theological reflection on the Korean contextual experiences of the Minjung throughout the last three decades of Korean Christian history. Thus, one can say that Minjung theology is a socio-political biography of Korean Christians from the period of the 1970s to the present.

Han

Han is also a Korean word that refers to an accumulation of suppressed and condensed experiences of oppression. In

⁶ Byung Mu Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," in Minjung Theology, ed. Yong Bock Kim (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1981), 136-51.

⁷ Jae Soon Park, "Jesus' Table Community Movement and the Church," trans. Dae Sung Kwon, Asia Journal of Theology 7 (1993): 79.

terms of its etymology, Han is a psychological word. However, it is a term which refers to the feeling of suffering and hopelessness of the oppressed, the feeling of unresolved resentment against unjustifiable suffering of both the individual dimension and collective dimension. Han is an awareness both of individual psychological levels as well as social and political levels.

Tochakwha

Tochakwha is a Korean word which means "indigenization."

Just as the word "indigenization" means "to adapt to local ways,"⁸ the word Tochakwha includes the meaning of adaptation as an artificial mixture of Christianity with other local religions. Above all, the definition of indigenization is closely related to the indigenization of the Christian gospel within the context of Korean traditional religions in relation to the method of hermeneutics to dialogues with other religions and cultures.

Tochakwha Theology

Tochakwha theology means "indigenization theology." This theological debate arose in the 1960s as an epoch-making turning point in the history of Korean theology. This theology emphasized at that time the cultural identity of Korean Christians in the midst of the process of Westernization. The Tochakwha theologians' main concerns from

⁸ "Indigenous," Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed.

the early stage to the present are how the Western theologies can be transformed more or less into indigenized forms or paradigms. Put simply, the indigenization theology is a theology of religion and culture which attempts to reinterpret the Christian gospel on the basis of traditional religions and culture.

Dankoon Myth

The Dankoon myth is the story of Dankoon, who was the mythical founder of Korea. According to the tradition, he lived in 2332 B.C.E., at about the same time that the first legendary rulers of China were living. Charles Allen Clark, who was a missionary of Korea in the early period of Christianity, briefly summarizes the myth.

In the ancient Korean cosmogony, the first great being was a Divine One called "Whanin," the creator. His son, "Whanwoong," asked and obtained permission from his father to found a kingdom on the earth in the north of Korea. Accompanied by three thousand other spirits, he descended upon "Taipaik" Mountain, now near "Pyongyang" He gathered his spirit friends, and there he proclaimed himself "King of the Universe." but, as he had not yet taken human shape, he found it very difficult to take direct charge of a purely human kingdom Searching after incarnation, he found it in the following manner: At early dawn, a tiger and a bear met on the mountain-side and held a colloquy. "Would that we might become men!" they said. "Whanwoong" overheard them, and a voice came out of the void to him, saying, "Here are twenty garlicks, and a piece of artemisia for each of you. Eat and retire from the light of the sun for thrice seven days, and you will become men." They ate and retired to a cave, but the tiger, by the reason of the fierceness of his nature, could not endure the restraint, and came forth before the allotted time. The bear, with greater faith and patience, waited the full twenty-one days and stepped forth a perfect woman. The first wish of the woman's heart was maternity, and

she cried, "Give me a son!" "Whanwoong," the spirit of King, passing on the wind, beheld her sitting there beside the stream. He circled around her, breathed upon her, and her cry was answered. She cradled her babe in the moss beneath the "Pakdal" tree, and it was there the wild people of the country in after years found him sitting, and they made him their king. This was "Dankoon," whose name translated means the "Lord of the 'Pakdal' Tree."⁹

Some scholars believe that Dankoon was probably a "great Shaman."¹⁰ However, in the Korean tradition, he is the mythical founder of Korea (2332 B.C.E.) and he was called Whangom because of the son of Whanwoong. Thus, the names of Whanin, Whanwoong, Whangom are very important in explaining the concept of the Trinitarian doctrine of Western Christianity in Tochakwha theology.

Work Previously Done in the Field

Even though there are no homiletical works for Korean contextual theology which deal with preaching as a theological act, some publications concerning Minjung theology and Tochakwha theology were published beginning in the 1970s. The most representative work is the book Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History.¹¹ This book includes a discussion of the content of Minjung theology from the many different fields of perspectives of prominent Korean Minjung

⁹ Charles Allen Clark, Religions of Old Korea (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1932), 137-39.

¹⁰ Charles Allen Clark, 176.

¹¹ Yong Bock Kim, ed., Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1981).

theologians. Despite being the first book published, this text provides plenty of explanation of Minjung theology. Another good introductory book about Minjung theology is An Emerging Theology in World Perspective, edited by Jung Young Lee.¹² This book presents prominent world theologians' responses to Minjung theology, including Robert McAfee Brown, John Cobb, Choan-seng Song, and Jose M. Bonino. This book also provides good information, basic themes, approaches, and issues of Minjung theology.

The unpublished manuscript, The Minjung Church Movement by Kyeong Shin Kang is also a good work in this field.¹³ Kang presents the Minjung Church movement as an emerging church movement in the socio-political, ecclesiastical, and ecumenical context of Korean society. Another unpublished source is Holistic Theology for Holistic Evangelism in Korea by Seok Won Choi which also serves as a good introduction to the Korean contextual theologies.¹⁴ This is the only work which deals with the content of Korean Tochakwha (indigenization) theology in English. Choi also delicately examines the historical and social background of the emergence

¹² Jung Young Lee et al., eds., An Emerging Theology in World Perspective: Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988).

¹³ Kyeong Shin Kang, The Minjung Church Movement: An Emerging Church Movement in Korea, D.Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1992 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1992).

¹⁴ Seok Won Choi, Holistic Theology for Holistic Evangelism in Korea, D.Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1988 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1988).

of Korean contextual theologies for the strategy of "holistic mission." He also introduces here another contextual theology, the Korean "holistic theology." His theology emphasizes the necessity of "holistic evangelism" through "holistic hermeneutics" and "biblio-historical faith."

Scope and Limitation of the Project

Korean Christianity has about a hundred year-old history which has, in a large sense, three different types. The first is evangelical fundamentalism, which emphasizes evangelism. This type of Christianity and its theology regard the Bible as the authoritative canon. The second type is social concerns emphasizing the struggle for the liberation of suffering people. This type is concerned with social justice and the human rights movement which stems from Minjung and Liberation theological backgrounds. The third type is pentecostalism. This pentecostalism emphasizes baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and spiritual healing as unique Christian expressions.¹⁵ Along with these three types of Christianity and theologies, this project will focus on Minjung theology and Tochakwha theology as good models of contextual theology.

This project focuses primarily on Minjung and Tochakwha theologies because theology cannot be separated from its context, and it also cannot take place in a vacuum. An examination of frontier contextual theologies, such as Minjung

¹⁵ Boo Woong Yoo, "Response to Korean Shamanism by the Korean Pentecostal Church," International Review of Mission 75 (1986): 70-71.

and Tochakwha theology will be helpful in articulating an alternative theology of preaching. In addition, the analysis of the Korean context through the social and political as well as cultural and religious dimensions will be examined.

Procedure for Integration

This project is not only about the analysis of existing Korean contextual theologies, but also the articulation of an alternative theology in the current Korean context. As mentioned already, two frontier Korean contextual theologies, Minjung theology and Tochakwha theology, have had their limitations.

Therefore, to present an alternative theology as a new theological articulation, this project will take steps to examine these two frontier theologies. After this, the writer will try to make an integration and supplementation of the two existing theologies. This new theology will be called Kobaik kwa Mannam eui Shinhak, which means the confession and encounter theology within the Korean socio-political and religious context.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 covers the thesis of the project, the problem and its importance, the definition of major terms, work previously done in the field, the scope and limitation of the project, and the procedure for integration.

Chapter 2 illustrates the historical Korean context. This chapter examines what elements of the contextual

situation have contributed to the articulation of these Minjung and Tochakwha theologies. This chapter will also introduce what kinds of Korean preaching models have existed in Korea.

Chapter 3 introduces Minjung theology as a representative contextual theology. This chapter includes the content of Minjung theology as well as its limitation and merits as a contextual theology. After examining this theology, I will analyze a sermon and explore the unique elements in minjung preaching.

Chapter 4 introduces the Tochakwha theology as another Korean contextual theology. This chapter examines the content of this theology as well as its limitations and contributions to the Korean churches. After introducing the theology, this writer will examine a sermon and explore the elements of preaching based on Tochakwha theology.

In Chapter 5, this writer suggests an alternative theology, Kobaik kwa Mannam eui Shinhak, which overcomes the limitations of the two frontier theologies. This theology is a confession and encounter theology within the Korean context. This new alternative theology provides implications for preaching as a theological act.

Chapter 6 is a summary of the discussions.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Illustration of the Korean
Context and Korean PreachingThe Korean Context

Famous liberation theologian Leonardo Boff asserts that "Christianity cannot be found outside of history; it only exists in its historical concretizations."¹ Another theologian, Stephen B. Bevans, also supports the above assertion explaining that theology is "the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of particular context."² Just as these theologians insist on an inseparable relationship between theologies and their context, Korean theologies, especially Minjung and Tochakwha theologies, have been articulated from the historical and cultural experience and expression of the Korean context.

In order to examine these Korean theologies and to suggest an alternative theology, consideration needs to be given to the analysis of the Korean historical context. Due to the inseparable relationship between theology and its context, in this section this writer will illustrate the historical Korean context by focusing on: (1) a brief sketch

¹ Leonardo Boff, Church: Charism and Power, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1985), 69.

² Stephen B. Bevans, Models of Contextual Theology (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992), 1.

of the general history of Korea, (2) an historical illustration of the socio-political context, and (3) an historical illustration of the cultural and religious context.

Brief Sketch of the General History of Korea

In the golden age of Asia
Korea was one of its lamp bearers,
and that lamp is waiting
to be lighted once again
for the illumination in the East³

Although eminent Indian philosopher Rabindranath Tagore once said that "In the golden age of Asia, Korea was one of its lamp bearers," Korea, an ancient nation with about five thousand years of history and rich cultural heritage, "had been by and large a terra incognita"⁴ as far as most Western people were concerned. Until early in this century, when Christianity was introduced into Korea for the first time, Western writers and missionaries called Korea "the hermit Kingdom."⁵ The legends of early Korean society and culture have echoed down over thousands of years, living on the peninsula as artistic and creative beauty. Yet, today Korea is still relatively unknown to most foreigners, who usually consider the Far East as one land mass of Asia.

³ Rabindranath Tagore, "Korea," as quoted in Tae Hung Ha, Korea: Forty Three Centuries (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1958), 1.

⁴ Andrew C. Nahm, Introduction to Korean History and Culture (Elizabeth, N.J.: Hollym International, 1993), ix.

⁵ See T. Stanley Soltau, Korea: The Hermit Nation and Its Response to Christianity (London: World Dominion Press, 1932), 14-15; and Nahm, ix.

For Westerners Korea is far away, sandwiched between the more familiar China and Japan with two narrow bodies of water for insulation. Yet, this country is also very unique. Though the Korean peninsula has been invaded a thousand times by foreign countries,⁶ Koreans have survived and kept their own identity, with a culture that rivals the early cultures of China, and contributed to the cultural origin and development of Japan.

Korea has been called by many different names over the centuries. One of its earliest names was Ancient Choson (2,333 - 20 B.C.E.). Later, parts of the peninsula were called Koguryo (37 B.C.E.- A.D. 668), Paekche (18 B.C.E.- A.D. 660), Silla (57 B.C.E.-A.D. 935), and finally Koryo (A.D. 918 - 1392). In more recent times Korea was called Choson (A.D. 1392 - 1910) or the Yi (Lee) Dynasty.⁷

Over the last several hundred years, when Korean rulers did not welcome foreign contact, the nation was referred to as the "hermit Kingdom." Later, the country was frequently called the "Land of Morning Calm." Now, in Korea's modern era, this mist of early morning calm has disappeared and the

⁶ See Young Soo Kim, "Legitimacy: Freedom Fighters and the Secession to Independence Spirit," in The Identity of the Korean People (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification, 1983), 26.

⁷ See Ki-baik Lee, A New History of Korea, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers, 1984), 387-94. Among the three kingdoms of Silla, Paekche, and Koguryo, Silla finally occupied Paekche and Koguryo and achieved the first unified kingdom of the Korean peninsula in 668.

nation can be called a "land of cultural contrasts." The modern and traditional can be seen side by side. Koreans have become quite Westernized, but they still cling to many old cultural elements and traditions.

Historical Illustration of the Socio-Political Context

In the long history of Korea, the Korean people have struggled socially and politically in order to protect the nation against foreign invasions. According to a Korean historian, on the Korean peninsula, as many as 931 invasions were recorded from the beginning of the Silla to the end of the Yi dynasty.⁸ Concerning this historical fact, Jung Young Lee illustrates as follows:

Those who have studied the history of Korea can easily understand the saga of oppression, poverty, and dehumanization inflicted upon the Korean people by such great powers as China, Japan, and Russia. For more than for thousand years of national history Koreans have enjoyed only a relatively brief period of peace and autonomy. They have lived under the shadow of powerful and neighboring countries.⁹

Indeed, the Koreans struggled in order to survive from the countless invasions and keep their identity in the midst of the socio-political suffering caused by the invasions.

Concerning the socio-political context of Christianity, Korean Christianity also was formulated as a product of socio-

⁸ Young Soo Kim, 26.

⁹ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology: A Critical Introduction," in An Emerging Theology in World Perspective, eds. Jung Young Lee et al. (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publication, 1988), 5.

political struggle in this Korean context. When Western Christianity was introduced into the Korean historical context, Christianity was accepted in Korea and developed within a particular socio-political milieu of suffering and oppression.

Regarding the history of Christianity in Korea, a Minjung theologian, Chai-yong Choo, divides the history of Korean Christianity into five different periods: "The Period of Acceptance," (1876-1896); "The Formative Period of the Church of the Minjung," (1896-1919); "The Depoliticization Period," (1919-1932); "The Period of the Babylonian Captivity," (1932-1960); and "The Period of Awakening," (1960 to the present).¹⁰

In following Choo's distinction, he emphasizes that the acceptance period of Christianity (1876-1896) "was an extremely complicated and uncertain period."¹¹ During this period, 1876 was a year of tragedy in which the Korean government signed the "Byungja Treaty" of peace and amity with Japan. It was an example of an unequal treaty with a foreign

¹⁰ Chai-yong Choo, "A Brief Sketch of a Korean Christian History from the Minjung Perspective," in Minjung Theology (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1981), 69-76.

¹¹ Choo, 70. Here, Chai-yong Choo regards the year 1876 as the first year of acceptance of Korean Christianity, unlike other scholars who assert 1884. He insists that in 1876 in Manchuria, Yi Ung-chan (the Korean language teacher of John Ross and his fellow missionary John MacIntyre) was baptized by MacIntyre. Thus, Choo regards Yi as the first Protestant Korean Christian, and Yi's baptism was a symbol of the beginning of Korean Christianity.

country, and it was a break in the Korean government's policy of seclusion (Isolation Policy).¹²

During the early acceptance period of Christianity, there were many significant political events in the Korean context. The events included the "Imo Military Revolt" (1882), the "Korean and American Treaty of Amity" (1884), the "Kapshin Coup" (1884), the "Kapo Reformation" (1894), the "Tonghak Peasant Revolutionary Uprising" (1894), the "Sino-Japanese War" (1895), and the founding of the "Independence Association" (1897).¹³

Among these historical events during the period of 1876-1896, the Revolutionary Uprising of the Tonghak Peasant Army, a revolt in the southern part of Korea against the official corruption and oppression was significant. A Korean historian, Ki-baik Lee, describes the context as follows:

Under the pro-Chinese reactionaries, the selling and buying of government positions was a common practice. Anyone who purchased an official position would generally reimburse himself through extortion. Taxes and levies were increased by local and national governments until they reached three or four times legal rate. Extravagance, licentiousness, and debauchery were the order of the day at that time.¹⁴

The suffering peasants could not tolerate this and could no longer remain silent about these circumstances. Concerning the contextual situation at this time, R. E. Speer, a

¹² See Ki-baik Lee, 270.

¹³ See Choo, 71.

¹⁴ See Ki-baik Lee, 281. See also Choo, 71.

Christian missionary, explains the people's complaint:

The five relations of man in this world are sacred. When King and courtiers are harmonious, father and son loving, blessing follows and the kingdom will be established forever. Our sovereign is a dutiful son, a wise, just and benevolent ruler, but this cannot be said of his courtiers They close the ears and eyes of the King so that he neither hears the appeals of the people nor sees their true condition Our country's condition now is worse than it has ever been before.¹⁵

The Uprising borrowed its name from a newly emerged religious sect which was founded by Korean Confucian scholar Che-u Choi.¹⁶ The religion was established by the acquired knowledge and syncretistic elements from many preexisting religions. A branch of this new religion acted as a conspicuous part of the Independence Movement in 1919.

From 1895 to 1905, Korean socio-political events encouraged a considerable expansion of Christianity. Especially in 1905, the Japanese invasion of Korea became patent (monopoly or desire for exclusive possession) with the making of the Eulsa Protectorate Treaty.¹⁷ Korea's standing in the international community as an independent nation was destroyed by this treaty. Japanese political and military control over Korea began to escalate. Ki-baik Lee describes the reactions to the situation:

¹⁵ Robert. E. Speer, Presbyterian Foreign Mission (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1901), 163-79.

¹⁶ Yong Choon Kim, The Ch'ondogyo Concept of Man (Seoul: Pan Korea Book Corp., 1978), 3.

¹⁷ Ki-baik Lee, 309-10.

The Treaty of 1905 evoked bitter anger and opposition from the whole of the Korean people. Despite strict Japanese censorship of both news and editorial content, the Korean press took the lead in rousing public opinion against the treaty. Once aroused, public outrage quickly reached the boiling point. Endless memorials streamed in and countless oral protests were voiced, demonstrations were held and places of business closed their doors. In an excess of indignation and anger, Min Yong-hwan, the military aide-de-camp to the King, left an impassioned testamentary letter to the nation and took his own life guerrilla forces, "righteous armies," rose throughout the country to resist Japan by forces of arms.¹⁸

Without question, the important political event in the period from 1919 to 1932 was the Independence Movement of 1919. A group of thirty-three outstanding religious leaders prepared a declaration of independence, and they proclaimed it publicly at the Pagoda Park in Seoul, but simultaneous resistance meetings occurred all over the country against the Japanese government as well as its military police.¹⁹ The resistance movement was not only a peaceful but also a powerful demonstration against Japanese totalitarian authorities. As a result of the movement, the Japanese government abandoned the use of military police and began to practice a policy of appeasement.

The period of the 1960s-1980s was the beginning of the

¹⁸ Ki-baik Lee, 311.

¹⁹ Allen D. Clark, History of the Church in Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1961), 198. Among the 33 religious leaders, 15 were Christian, 15 Ch'ondogyo, and 3 Buddhists.

period of awakening²⁰ of historical consciousness. After the March 1st Independence Movement of 1919, Korean Christianity moved into a depoliticization period. However, the "Student's Revolution" of April 19, 1960, against the authoritarianism of the decayed government of Syngman Rhee, was an heir to the spirit of the Independence Movement of 1919.

Beginning with the military coup d'etat of May 16, 1961, until the 1980s, the Korean socio-political situation can be described as a very dark period due to the military regimes' powerful system of rule. The military regimes prohibited the peoples' free speech and punished critics as criminals. Under this strict ruling system, the people suffered from the tyranny of the military dictatorships. In order to keep permanent power, the military regimes used military power, including martial law, which extended their jurisdiction. Military troops took over all political powers.²¹

To make the situation worse, the military government's "modernization" policies produced many terrible side effects for the society.²² In the meantime, Korean Christianity confronted the dictatorship of the military government during this period. Many Christian leaders issued statements calling

²⁰ Choo, 75.

²¹ Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, Lost Victory (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1988), 23.

²² See Younghak Hyun, "Minjung Theology and the Religion of Han," East Asia Journal of Theology 3 (1985): 354.

for resistance to all forms of dictatorship, injustice, irregularities, and corruption. Many progressive Christian leaders also stressed that Christians must reject the impure influences of foreign powers on all aspects of Korean life: economic, cultural, ethical, and political. Many young Korean religious workers became involved with concrete and specific missions, such as the Urban Industrial Mission.

Indeed, the history of Korean Christianity cannot be separated from the experiences of Korean peoples and their context. As Minjung theologians insist, Korean Christianity has grown in a history of Korean socio-political situations. This is the reason why Minjung theologians stress that Korean Christianity must be seen from the perspectives of historical contextualization.

Historical Illustration of the Cultural and Religious Context

Throughout the five thousand years of Korean history, there have existed many different religions in Korea, such as Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Ch'ondogyo.²³ Above all, according to Jung Young Lee, "The

²³ Ch'ondogyo is a "modern, humanistic, and syncretistic Korean religion." This religion took portions of Confucianism, Buddhism, Shamanism, and Christianity. Its principles are based on the concept of the human as divine. According to Ch'ondogyo's doctrine, humans were not created by an objectively existing personal God, but rather, are manifestations of God, who is the immanent totality of all things. Ch'ondogyo was originally called "Tonghak," meaning "Eastern learning" or "Eastern Philosophy." Currently, Ch'ondogyo has about 600,000 members in Korea. See Yong Choon Kim, 15.

Korea has had many more religions throughout its history

religious orientation of the Korean people is best characterized as syncretism of the various religious traditions."²⁴ From this point of view, even though each religion has had a prosperous period in Korea, each incorporates the other in terms of having syncretistic elements. For example, although Korean Christians identify themselves as Christians and consider their modes of thought to be based on the Western form of Christianity, they retain many powerful elements of the other religions, such as the spirit worship of Korean Shamanism. Thus, many scholars are convinced that Korean Christianity, particularly Korean Pentecostalism, has a close connection with other religions as an indigenous syncretistic Christian movement.²⁵

Regarding the Korean contextual situation of the various religions, as well as the Korean spiritual climate, piety, and religious ethos, the study of religion and cultural context necessarily must be done in terms of a comparative study of

than the major four religions mentioned above. One of these is Taoism. Particularly, one could insist that Taoism must also be one of the major Korean religions. However, in order to have a brief examination of the major Korean religions in this chapter, and in terms of its many similarities with other Korean religions, Taoism will not be discussed. Albeit, it should be noticed that Taoism has the same objects of worship and exorcism as Korean Shamanism. For example, Okhwangsangchei (one of the very highest of the Shamanistic gods) in Korean Shamanism is undoubtedly Yuhhwangsangti of the Taoists in China. See Charles Allen Clark, 127-29.

²⁴ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 5.

²⁵ Walter J. Hollenweger, "After Twenty Years' Research on Pentecostalism," International Review of Mission 75 (1986): 3.

religion. Concerning the way of study, Tongshik Ryu, a well-known Korean theologian dealing with the theology of indigenization, suggests that Korean Christianity also must be examined by a comparative study of religion. For instance, according to Ryu, Korean Christianity must be understood as a "paternal religion" influenced by Confucianistic soil, and "maternal religion" influenced by Shamanistic soil.²⁶ Ryu's assertion can easily be understood because Confucianism attracted mostly males and the elite classes, whereas Shamanism during the Yi Dynasty served as a religion of women and the common people.

Among many religions, particularly Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Ch'ondogyo, a close relationship exists with Korean Christianity and their theologies. Therefore, the examination of these religions will be very helpful to understand Korean's religious soil and ethos. The purpose of the examination is not to develop a systematic analysis of each religion but rather to indicate some elements in each religion which has influenced Korean Christianity. Indeed, Korean Christianity, as a relatively recent arrival, encountered many other religions and their cultures in Korea.

All the Korean religions have expressed their uniqueness with the cultures in terms of engaging in cultural exchanges.

²⁶ Tongshik Ryu, "Hankuk Kyohoiwa Seongryung Undong" [Korean church and pentecostalism], in Hankuk Kyohoi Seongryung Undong Hyunsangkwa Kujo [The phenomenon and the structure of the Korean Pentecostal Movement] (Seoul: Korean Christian Academy Press, 1982), 10.

Each religion became the foundation of the culture in each period of Korea. For example, while Buddhism left many religious products in the Silla, Koguryo, Paekche, and Koryo periods, which include paintings, sculpture, and art objects; Confucianism left art and literature such as Hangul (Korean alphabet) and Sijo (traditional poem) during the Yi dynasty.

Historically, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism were imported to Korea from China during the Three Kingdoms period of the third century. These religions had often been used by the ruling and upper classes to dominate the poor and lower classes. Shamanism, one of the earliest religions, still retains a powerful influence on other religions and on the culture today. As the religion of the poor and lower classes, Shamanism, which included spirit worship, has been the religion of the poor and lower classes. Even though many new modes of religions and their doctrines have influenced Korean life style and moral teachings, Shamanism has remained a basic religious foundation for other imported religions.²⁷ Therefore, Korean Shamanism has a hold on the credulous elements of folk religion and the sustainable elements in history. This is the reason why Korean Buddhism and Christianity include many elements of Korean Shamanism. Korean Shamanism has influenced not only Buddhism and Christianity but also other Korean religions such as

²⁷ Tongshik Ryu, Christian Faith Encounters Religions of Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1965), 21.

Ch'ondogyo and Confucianism.²⁸

Shamanism postulates a universe in which not only human beings but also lower animals and inanimate objects have souls or spirits. In Shamanism, above all the spirits stands Hananim.²⁹ Hananim dominates the lives of the people as well as all created beings, and remains the creator of the events of the world. To sum up, the World Christian Encyclopedia describes Korean Shamanism as follows:

Shamanism is the traditional religion, and still the most widely practiced one, in Korea. It involves a strong belief in the influences of departed ancestral spirits as well as nature spirits who inhabit trees, rocks, and other natural phenomena. These in turn must be propitiated or otherwise controlled either by individuals or by priest (Shaman: Mudang) to ensure health, fertility, and success in life's venture.³⁰

Buddhism was also a religion imported early on into Korea and became the state religion of the Three Kingdoms and Koryo periods, which lasted until the last part of the fourteenth century. Among the Three Kingdoms, the Koguryo kingdom

²⁸ See Ryu, Christian Faith Encounters Religions of Korea, 21.

²⁹ Hananim is a combination of two Korean words. Hanal means "blue sky," Nim means "horrible spirit." See Charles Allen Clark, 197.

³⁰ "Korean Shamanism," World Christian Encyclopedia. Regarding the role of a Shaman, a Korean Shaman acts as priest, medicine-man, and prophet. In addition, Shamans promote folk-art and folk-culture in Korea. See Chu-kun Chang, "An Introduction to Korean Shamanism," in Shamanism: The Spirit World of Korea, eds. Chai-Shin Yu and R. Guisso (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988), 30.

accepted it for the first time in A.D. 372.³¹ Buddhism flourished in the Three Kingdoms of Korea during the sixth century and it was introduced to Japan through the Paekche kingdom.³²

Korean Buddhism comes from the Mahayana sect that flourished in north eastern Asia, primarily in China. In its teaching, human beings must deny a life of indulgence in sensual pleasure and a life of self-mortification because in this world there are always miseries and sufferings. Only in denying sensual pleasure and desire will salvation be acquired. By avoiding the extremes of indulgence and self mortification, human beings can achieve Nirvana.³³ In these teachings and doctrines, scholars also notice that Korean Buddhism was also incorporated into the indigenous belief systems, such as Shamanism and Taoism, and was accompanied by a fascination with Confucianism.³⁴

Following Buddhism, Confucianism flourished and became the state religion of the Yi Dynasty for five hundred years (1392-1910). However, it ranks immediately after Shamanism in

³¹ Ki-baik Lee, 59.

³² Seoul International Publishing House, Focus on Korea (Seoul: Samsung Moonwha Printing Co., 1988), 27.

³³ Ryu, Christian Faith Encounters Religions of Korea, 45-58.

³⁴ Kye-hyon Ahn, "A Short History of Ancient Korean Buddhism," in Introduction of Buddhism to Korea, eds. Lewis R. Lancaster and C. S. Yu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 2, 31.

influence. More than any other religion, it has shaped the social and political forms of Korean culture. Even though Confucianism was introduced in the early history of Korea,³⁵ it gradually increased in strength and it finally became the official teaching of the Yi Dynasty. Thus, to the end of the Yi Dynasty in A.D.1910, one can say, from the perspective of the gentry (the ruling class) that Korea was basically a Confucian society, and to some degree is so even in contemporary society in Korea today.

Confucianism can be regarded as not only a religion but also as a system of moral teachings or ideology.³⁶ As a religion, Confucianism discusses that Sang-ti (the Lord on high) indicates certain understanding of a supernatural God or gods.³⁷ Thus, Confucianists consciously emphasize that human beings must not live against Sang-ti or heavenly will. This discussion certainly demonstrates that Confucianism has more concerns about religious matters than material matters. As moral teachings, Confucianism emphasizes that humans are

³⁵ Martin Deuchler, The Confucian Transformation of Korea (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University; distrib. by Harvard University Press, 1992), 14. According to Deuchler, the first Confucian academy was established in the Kingdom of Koguryo in A.D. 372. In this time, all three kingdoms were dominated by Buddhism, and the role of Confucianism was very limited to some state functions, most notably the education of officials.

³⁶ See Deuchler, 24-28.

³⁷ Young-chan Ro, "Ancestor Worship: From the Perspective of Korean Tradition," in Ancestor Worship and Christianity in Korea, ed. Jung Young Lee (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 14.

born to be upright and virtuous. The moral principle for the fulfillment of human nature is social relations called Yeh (propriety) or the code of proper conduct. These principles extend to all basic human relationships, such as those between king and subject, father and son, man and wife, old and young, friend and friend. Ancestor worship resulted from the form of filial piety between those relationships. As an ideology, Confucianism addresses itself in a comprehensive and compelling way toward social problems. Thus, during the Yi Dynasty, "Neo-Confucianism contained clear precepts of socio-political renovation . . . and strived to determine and implement a reform program that would Confucianize Korean society."³⁸

In general, the Confucian understanding of religion is conveyed in two Chinese letters Chong and Gyo, which mean "the highest and greatest teaching." When Korean Christians have tried to understand their religion and the Christian God, the understanding and teachings of Confucianism have been very helpful. Ryu asserts that Confucianism has helped Korean Christians understand their theological and ethical conceptions.³⁹

At the end of the Yi Dynasty, the coming of Christianity and the rise of new religions marked a new age. Ch'ondogyo, which formed in the Korean context of 1895 is also one of the

³⁸ Deuchler, 27.

³⁹ Ryu, Christian Faith Encounters Religions of Korea, 93.

newly emerging religions of this era. In the midst of the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, Ch'ondogyo became the most prominent religion. With the other newly emerging religions such as Christianity, Ch'ondogyo closely allied with the Minjung's struggle for liberation and independence of the Korean people from the colonial rule of Japan.

According to Yong Choon Kim, Ch'ondogyo is a "modern, humanistic, and syncretistic religion." The word consists of three Chinese letters -- Ch'on, Do, and Gyo -- and means "The Religion of the Heavenly Way."⁴⁰ Essentially Ch'ondogyo's principles are based on the concept of man as both human and divine. Kim explains "Man is conceived to be God, yet he is to believe in God. The immortality of the soul is denied, yet the eternal survival of one's character is affirmed."⁴¹

Ch'ondogyo believers claim that man is God and that the

⁴⁰ Yong Choon Kim, 1. The founder, Che-u Choi was born October 28, 1824 at Kyongju, a small Southern city of Korea. His personal quality of life led him to seek the "Way." He had a unique birth and early life, and an inborn proclivity for the intense search for truth, and also a passionate revolutionary spirit against the social injustice that was placed upon his destiny. As he grew up in a Confucian family, he was trained by the Confucian moral teachings. But his knowledge of Taoism, Buddhism, Shamanism, and Christianity contributed to the establishment of the religion, Ch'ondogyo. See Yong Choon Kim, 3-9.

⁴¹ Yong Choon Kim, 1. Ch'ondogyo is limited to "the Kingdom of Heaven on earth." It is largely a humanistic religion, but it insists that it is not theism. Concerning the origin of man, the doctrine of Ch'ondogyo is very different from Christianity's. The Ch'ondogyo thinkers have rejected the Christian concept of the creation of man by a transcendent and personal creator as mythological and dualistic. See also Yong Choon Kim, 12.

doctrine is limited to the kingdom of Heaven on earth. From the realization of serious moral decay in the nation, the religion began as a messianic cult in an effort to save the nation from internal corruption and the influence of foreign invasions. In 1894, the eminent leaders of Ch'ondogyo led "the Revolutionary Uprising of the Tonghak Peasant Army," and in 1919 the leaders of the religion took a conspicuous role in "the Independent Movement" against Japan.

Although Ch'ondogyo is a syncretistic religion in terms of taking the contents of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shamanism, and Christianity, Ch'ondogyo was particularly named "Tonghak" (Eastern Learning) as a deliberate counter-measure against Western religion and culture. Because, according to Kim, "the founder was convinced that Western religions were not acceptable to Koreans" in the midst of the vulnerable contextual situation as a "hermit kingdom."⁴² In the current situation, Ch'ondogyo also has an incorporation with Korean Christianity as a co-existing religion in the Korean context.

This brief sketch of the Korean socio-political and religious-cultural history may shed some light on the recent development of the contextual theologies such as Minjung and Tochakwha theologies. From this orientation, attention focusing on the contextual theologies will be paid in the following chapters.

⁴² Yong Choon Kim, 6-7.

Korean Preaching

"Theology is reflection between yesterday's and today's proclamation."⁴³ As Gerhard O. Forde stresses in the above statement, indeed, theology and proclamation are inseparable. In order to compare the Korean preacher's proclamation between yesterday and today, consideration needs to be given to an examination of the different theological backgrounds of preaching. The methods of delivery of Korean preaching also needs to be discussed in this section for a thorough cogitation of Korean preaching.

Throughout the one hundred years of Korean Christian history, Korean theology of preaching can be analyzed typologically by the three categories of fundamentalism, conservatism, and progressivism. In a word, among these three types, only progressivism seems to have a very close connection with the Korean contextual issues and the culture as a Korean contextual theology of preaching.

First of all, as for the theology of preaching in fundamentalism, the preaching has been done based solely upon the authority of the Bible. In terms of biblical Literalism, the preachers tend to turn the Bible into an object of faith. The preachers also generally use a deductive way of preaching with "the authoritative foundation of traditional

⁴³ Gerhard O. Forde, Theology is for Proclamation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 13.

preaching."⁴⁴ The preachers are willing to remain as authoritative persons. This tendency has dominated throughout the one hundred years of Korean church history.

Concerning the tendency of fundamentalism, one of Korea's frontier scholars of the 1930s, Nak Jun Paik, wrote of the necessity of overcoming this tendency in terms of the preachers' broad study.

Our basis of wisdom always comes from the books. Thus, our preachers need to read many books and studies As for preachers, not only reading the Bible but also reading the books for social science, church history, religious dogmatics, and the Saints' biographies are necessary to read. Because, in order to know the Bible properly, our preachers must search the historical, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the Bible.⁴⁵

In this fundamentalism, the theology of preaching makes a separation between the Bible and the context. In terms of the separation, the preachers never consider the context as an important element of preaching. Rather, the preachers generally have a negative attitude in dealing with the practical issues of cultural and socio-political dimensions of context in their so called "holy charismatic pulpit."

The fundamentalist preachers seems to have a strong conviction that the relations between faith and reason, or

⁴⁴ Fred B. Craddock, As One Without Authority (Enid, Okla.: Phillips University Press, 1971), 55.

⁴⁵ Nak Jun Paik, "Kyoyeokjaeui Youngjuk Seongjang Munje" [The concerns of the pastor's spiritual growth], in Mokhoijawa Seolkyo [Sermon and pastor], 21-22 (translation mine).

faith and social concerns must be separated.⁴⁶ They rationalize this emphasis in terms of the literal interpretation of the Bible. For them, the Bible is an absolute authoritative canon as a point of faith.

Concerning the separation of faith and the issues of the context, according to Young Han Kim, the preachers of fundamentalism tend to quote the Bible in order to assert their position, for instance, from 1 John 2:15-16.⁴⁷

Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world - the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches - comes not from the Father but from the world.⁴⁸

Through a literal interpretation of the text, the preachers of fundamentalism stress the world (the context) as a profane dimension. Thus, faith always remains based upon the literal teachings of the Bible not the profane teachings. Put simply,

⁴⁶ Yonggi Cho, a senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church (the largest local church in the world in terms of numbers, 600,000) emphasizes the relation between faith and reason as follows: "If we practice a religion, it must necessarily be a religious flesh. If we follow ethics and morality, we become moral and ethical flesh. If we receive a lot of education, we become educated flesh. Flesh is always flesh and cannot be changed into spirit, so we cannot be the spiritual man until we were born again." See Yonggi Cho, Salvation, Health, and Prosperity (Altamonte Springs, Fla.: Creation House, 1987), 29.

⁴⁷ Young Han Kim, "Hankuk Kyohoieui Seongkyong Haeseokkwa Seolkyoeui Yuhyungroncheok Punseokmit Munwhabyunhyuchoeuijuk Chaksang" [The typological analysis of the interpretation of the Bible and preaching and the ideas of reformation], in Mokhoijawa Seolkyo [Sermon and pastor], 19.

⁴⁸ The verses are taken from the NRSV.

the preachers of this fundamentalism seem to enjoy the literal interpretation of the Bible itself, and they absolutely ignore the necessity of analyzing their context as well as the historical context of the text which is necessary for contextual preaching.

This fundamentalism of preaching has prevailed from the beginning of Korean Christianity. According to Seong Koo Chung, a Korean Church historian, the most important motivation for this type of preaching comes from the influences of the early missionaries, who were not well trained by proper theological education. He says,

The missionaries in the early Christianity of Korea were very passionate. However, relatively, they were not well theologically educated people. Thus, whenever they preached, their poor Korean language skills caused their preaching to be very dependent on the literal interpretation of the Bible.⁴⁹

The preachers of fundamentalism emphasize not only the Bible as authoritative canon but also the role of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis about the role of the Holy Spirit in sermons seems to provide a successful inspiration for

⁴⁹ Seong Koo Chung, 214-15 (translation mine). However, this writer also sees more important motivation in the Korean situation due to the influences of U.S. fundamentalism, especially from the influences of Gresham Machen and his successors in Korea. See William R. Hutchison, Errand to the World (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 146-75. Due to this theological emphasis, many Korean Churches have kept silent during the dark periods of the Korean contextual situations with the military dictatorships. Rather, they spent their energies on the expansion of the Church instead of becoming involved in the social justice movements. As a result, this evangelical fundamentalism in Korea expanded rapidly during the periods of 1970s and 1980s.

preaching. However, the role of the Holy Spirit is very closely related to the understanding of folk religions such as Shamanism.⁵⁰ In particular, many famous Korean pentecostal preachers enjoy stressing the Holy Spirit and the role of evil spirits (Satan, demons, and evils). This emphasis seems to appeal to Korean Christians in relation to the understanding of the spirits and exorcism of Korean Shamanism.⁵¹ Even though the preachers refer to "biblical" concepts about the spirits in terms of biblical literalism, they proclaim "the independence of the Holy Spirit" without any consideration of traditional Trinitarian doctrine such as the relationship of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit.⁵²

Second, the preaching of conservatism has somewhat similar characteristics with the preaching of fundamentalism. However, the most important characteristic of conservatism is that the theology of preaching pursues the "Prefabricated and

⁵⁰ Young Han Kim, 31. They treat the role of the Holy Spirit as the head of the Korean Shamanistic pantheon. See Charles Allen Clark, 197.

⁵¹ Particularly, Rev. Yonggi Cho and Rev. Ki Dong Kim are very famous. Cho and Kim have been called "Christian Shamans" by their critics in view of their predominant emphasis upon healing, material blessings, speaking in tongues, and prayer. See David Suh, "Hankuk Seongryung Undong Kwa Puheung Undongeu Shinhakjuk Ihea" [The understanding of the Korean pentecostals and their theologies], in Hankuk Kidokkyoeui Saeinshik [A new realization of Korean Christianity] (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1985), 233-96.

⁵² David K. Suh, "Minjungkwa Seongryung" [Minjung and the Holy Spirit], in Minjungkwa Hankuk Shinhak [Minjung and Korean theology], ed. Committee of Theological Study, KNCC (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1982), 310-11.

Colonial Method."⁵³ The theology of preaching in this conservatism prefers to adapt to the teachings of Western Christian doctrines. This theology of preaching shows a very colonial pattern and content in terms of explaining the Western Christian doctrines.

In terms of not only adapting the Western doctrines but also of understanding the Bible's teachings, the preachers of conservatism emphasize the Christian moral obligations. Thus, the preachers preach the sermons as either kerygmatic preaching or didactic preaching in order to stress the moral obligations. Regardless of the consideration of their living context, the preachers generally tend to give sermons categorized according to Western doctrines and moral teachings. They emphasize the Christian's moral standard and the qualifications for Blessing by explaining the doctrines which they extracted from the principles of Western Christian tradition or the Bible.⁵⁴

Through the emphasis of Western Christian doctrine, the

⁵³ John England, "Source for Asian Theology," East Asia Journal of Theology 2 (1984): 206.

⁵⁴ A Korean homiletic scholar, Chang Bok Chung analyzed a book of sermons by fifty-five former moderators of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. (Among Presbyterian denominations, this one is between progressive and conservative.) These fifty-five sermons were preached from the first moderator in 1912 to the 1970 moderator of the denomination. According to Chung's analysis, the topics focused on the following: (1) mission preaching - 20.1%, (2) doctrinal preaching - 47.3%, (3) pastoral preaching - 23.6%, and (4) prophetic preaching - 9%. See Chang Bok Chung, Seolgyo Sayukron [Preaching ministry] (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1990), 93.

preaching in conservatism became very theocentric and Christocentric. They preached that Jesus was a good moral standard and that God sent Jesus to be the exemplar in terms of giving the power of the Spirit. In order to stress Jesus as a moral standard, they emphasize again and again about Western Christian history.

Preaching in conservatism generally tends to be expository sermons of the Bible. This type of preaching has been very strong. Thousands of Korean preachers have participated in expository sermon workshops and adapted this way of preaching for their pulpit. The seminars and workshops, such as Bethel, Crossway, and Navigator, are all this same kind of workshop which emphasizes expository sermons. They regard this way of expository preaching as the only way of rediscovering the Reformer's theology.⁵⁵ In terms of focusing on the Western concept of doctrines, they believe as William Hordern puts it, that "the work of the Holy Spirit is the outward one of proclaiming the Word and administering the sacraments and that the inner work of the Holy Spirit is secondary and only comes after the first."⁵⁶

As for the method of preaching, the preachers' expository sermons generally follow a three-point sermon style. This type of sermon is very typical method of conservatism, as well

⁵⁵ See Young Han Kim, 49-64.

⁵⁶ William Hordern, Experience and Faith (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), 98.

as fundamentalism. They try to avoid topical sermons as much as possible due to their focus on only the content of the Bible. Jong Yoon Lee, a famous preacher of the Choong Hyun Presbyterian Church in Seoul, is a good example. He has published numerous volumes of his expository sermons. His sermon "Podowon Nongboodeul" (Laborer in the vineyard) is a typical three-point sermon. He also presents a typical theocentric and didactic sermon via the three points.

1) God is not in debt to any human being. God is not obligated to pay back anything to us. We are not creditors in relation to God Rather, we have to serve God with a humble mind, by confessing, "We are unworthy servants"(Luke 17:10) If we serve God in order to get something from God, it is like giving money to a Shaman for his blessings. Christian faith is not a Shamanistic faith or "give and take" type of faith.

2) The text gives us another lesson: God is more concerned about life than material goods. Look at verses 6-7, where workers are idling in the market place. The landowner asked them, "Why do you stand here idle all day?" Their answer was "Because no one has hired us." The land owner was not concerned about the wages nor hours of work. He was more concerned about the need of the employees and their life. Today we are living in a material-centered society. We measure everything by money. For us, Christians, the concern and love for our neighbors has to be our top priority

3) The text shows us the truth of 19:30 Matthew 19:30 and 20:16 today's text tells us that those who believed first may lose their reward If we boast of our long history of faith as deacons, elders, and pastors we shall become the last. But even those new converts who trust in God for the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of salvation will be the first What is important is our thankfulness to God's grace for us and our commitment and dedication to the work of the

Kingdom⁵⁷

Finally, the preaching of progressivism has been more contextual preaching in relation to the socio-political context and cultural-religious context. Accordingly, the theologies of Tochakwha and Minjung belong to this progressivism. This theology of preaching has been a reflection of the Korean cultural and socio-political situation since the period of the late 1960s and 1970s.⁵⁸ The preachers have practiced direct theological movements and teachings for most of their lives. They began to see that the theology of preaching and the issues of context should not be separated. Tochakwha theologians taught that theology must be articulated within the Korean religious and cultural expressions. Whereas, Minjung theologians taught that theology must also be articulated within the specific socio-political issues of the Korean context.

Although there had been much contextual preaching during the periods of previous national crisis in Korea, the

⁵⁷ Jong Yoon Lee, "Podowon Nongboodeul" [Laborers in the vineyard], as quoted in Chi Young Kay, A Study of Contemporary Protestant Preaching in Korea, Ph.D. Diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1990 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1990), 43. The text for this sermon is taken from Matt. 20:1-16.

⁵⁸ From 1900-1907, aroused by an intense sense of national crisis and national humiliation by the establishment of a Japanese protectorate over Korea, and from the 1920s-1950s, under the Japanese persecution and the Korean War, there had been much contextual preaching which was based on an interpretation of the Exodus or Revelation. However, all these sermons were based on the theologies of fundamentalism and conservatism in terms of biblical literalism or expository preaching. See Allen D. Clark, 154-85.

prophetic interpretation and the biblical interpretations regarding this pluralism began from the period of the late 1960s and 1970s. Korean pastors and theologians' realization of the Korean religious heritage and socio-political situations led to a tendency of articulating theologies of contextual preaching. Many criticisms have been raised about these movements and many opponents attacked the Tochakwha theology movement as a syncretistic heresy and the Minjung theology movement as a politically revolutionary Communist Ideology.⁵⁹

However, progressive Tochakwha and Minjung theologians have continued to preach contextually. The theology is formulated by the concrete contextual situation of Korea in which ordinary people's struggle, pain, agony, despair, and Han have existed in various socio-political as well as pluralistic cultural and religious situations. In the midst of the crisis of Korean peoples' lives, the preaching of Tochakwha and Minjung theologies had to become pastoral preaching in order to cure the various sufferings of the Korean people. It has also become inductive preaching, where the people identifies with what the preacher is saying since the preacher has no authority. Many preachers of progressivism have tried to have a "conversation between the Scripture and the practical lives."⁶⁰ Therefore, the

⁵⁹ See Young Han Kim, 33-48.

⁶⁰ Craddock, As One Without Authority, 141.

preachers, above all, have found the motifs and elements of preaching in terms of an engagement of contextual experiences and expressions. The preachers have also tried to find a similarity between their life stories and their religious ethos from "the poetry, saga, historical narrative, proverb, hymn, diary, biography, parable, personal correspondence, drama, myth, and dialogue" of the Bible.⁶¹ Thus, the theology of preaching was a way of confession about "Praxis" and about the encounter with the people of the pluralistic cultures and religions in Korea.

Indeed, while the theologies of preaching in fundamentalism and conservatism have resonated with personal salvation, visible blessings, moral teachings, and doctrinal lessons for the expansion of church membership, the preaching of progressivism has resonated with the accomplishment of prophetic functions in the Korean cultural and socio-political context of the late 1960s to the present. As Korean contextual theologies of preaching, Tochakwha theology and Minjung theology, as well as their implications for preaching, will be examined in the following chapters in detail.

⁶¹ Craddock, As One Without Authority, 143.

CHAPTER 3

An Analysis of Minjung Theology

The Theology

Theology must be a living thing that has to do with people's very existence as human beings in a very concrete and particular situation. From this point of view, Minjung theology is, indeed, a living theology and originated from the Korean peoples' concrete and particular experiences of historical, political, social, and economic situations.

Emergent Background of the Theology

Minjung theology emerged from the socio-political concerns for the Minjung liberation movement which tried to develop a just, humane, free, and democratic society in the midst of the socio-political sufferings in the Korean context in the late 1960s and the 1970s. James H. Cone introduces Minjung theology like this:

Minjung theology of South Korea is one of the most creative theologies emerging from the political struggles of Third World peoples. With roots stretching back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it emerged as a fully developed theological voice in the 1970s Korean theologians begin with the particularity of their own situation as defined by poor peoples' attempt to overcome their suffering. They make no universal claims. Minjung theology is Korean theology; it is a theology that is accountable to the liberating history and culture of poor people in Korea.¹

¹ James H. Cone, preface of Minjung Theology, ed. Yong Bock Kim (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981), x.

As Cone indicates, Minjung theology emerged as a "fully developed theological voice" from a particular situation in the Korean context. The emergence of Minjung theology cannot be understood and isolated from its context. At least two motivations must be considered: the external theological movement of global impact, and the internal concrete socio-political situation of the Korean context.

First of all, Minjung theology emerged amid the influences of the widening impact of the theological movements of the 1960s and 1970s. According to Jung Young Lee, the temper of the times throughout the world, particularly the widening impact of the theological movement during the period, "provided a strong incentive to pursue an independent course of liberation."² The secular theology which was dominant in the 1960s was replaced by the Liberation theology of the Third World in the 1970s. The secular theologians who were critical of the understanding of classic theology became very active in doing theology directed toward transformation of society and politics. Minjung theology was articulated upon receiving inspiration from this global theological movement.

However, Minjung theology as a Korean socio-political theology of liberation has been more profoundly and pivotally influenced by Korea's internal socio-political situation. From this socio-political situation, Minjung theology was born

² Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 7.

out of the Korean Christians' experience.

Beginning with the military coup of May 16, 1961, the Korean society began to be characterized by oppression, poverty, and dehumanization caused by the brutal military regime which continued until the 1980s. The regime of Park Chung-hee amended the constitution to consolidate its own power permanently in 1972.³ Moreover, the fall of Vietnam and the threatening noises of North Korea through the increased military tension provided good excuses to strengthen the military dictatorship in the name of national security. Under this cruel tyranny, many Koreans and Christians who protested against the dictatorship were severely oppressed. They were tortured and sentenced to long imprisonment, and some of them, moreover, were deported from Korea. Of course, the authoritarian government constantly prohibited free speech and

³ This constitution was amended in the name of national security and social solidarity and was established as the Yushin Hunbup (Constitution of Restoration) under martial law. (See Kang, 16.) Under the relentless dictatorship of the military regime with the amended constitution, the Korean Christians got involved more and more directly in socio-political problems. In the late 1970s, this progressive Christian movement led to the national reunification movement, the movement to reunite North and South Korea. The human rights movement and the national reunification movement under the military regime were firmly rooted in the Korea people's aspirations for justice, freedom, and peace. And these aspirations were vitalized and concretized in the Kwangju Minjung's Uprising of 1980 against the military regime of General Chun Doo-hwan. The General was far more oppressive and totalitarian than ever. (See Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, 28-33.)

punished critics as criminals.⁴ In this period, the Korean was suffering under the evils of dehumanization and human rights abuses.

Not only political oppression but also tremendous injustices of the socio-economic structure were part of the dark shadows of the military regime's misguided policies. Specifically, the Korean "Modernization" policies were initiated after the military coup of 1961 to help to increase the GNP, but at the same time, they began to produce terrible side effects that began to appear during the middle part of the 1960s.⁵ The policies caused numerous social problems

⁴ All these repressions were made possible by mobilizing the notorious so-called Presidential Emergency Decrees, as well as by giving the KCIA free rein to solve the internal instability which resulted from the Yushin Constitution system, caused mainly by the fierce opposition of the people. The following table shows the abuse of tyranny's rule, especially under the Yushin System.

Martial Law and Emergency Decree in the 60s and the 70s

May 16, 1961:	Declaration of martial law, nationwide
June 3, 1964:	Declaration of martial law, Seoul
Aug. 26, 1965:	Declaration of garrison decree in Seoul
Oct. 15, 1971:	Declaration of garrison decree in Seoul
Dec. 6, 1971:	Declaration of state of national emergency
Oct. 17, 1972:	Declaration of martial law, nationwide
Jan. 8, 1974:	Declaration of Emergency Decree (ED) 1 and 2
Jan. 14, 1974:	Declaration of ED 3
April 3, 1974:	Declaration of ED 4
Aug. 23, 1974:	Declaration of ED 5 (removal of the ED 1, 4)
Dec. 31, 1974:	Declaration of ED 6 (removal of the ED 3)
April 8, 1975:	Declaration of ED 7 (closure of Korea University)
May 13, 1975:	Declaration of ED 8 and 9 (included ED 1, 4, and 7)
Oct. 18, 1979:	Declaration of martial law in Pusan
Oct. 20, 1979:	Garrison decree in Masan and Changwon

See Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, 24.

⁵ Hyun, 84-85.

such as "dehumanization, increase of the alienated class, sheer conflict of the rich and the poor, exploitation of the laborers and farmers, and so on."⁶ The deprivation of city laborers and rural peasants was especially conspicuous because of the misguided policies. Younghak Hyun comments on the policies:

More than half of the rural population were squeezed out of their homes because of the policies that were imposed for the purpose of keeping the price of the agricultural products low and of producing cheap labor for industrial development. Impoverished farmers, especially, the young ones had to move into either urban or industrial centers creating pockets of ghettos here and there. Sub-subsistence wages, long working hours, hazardous working conditions, lack of proper channel to complain or protest, etc. were hurting the young workers Innumerable incidents happened. For instance, some of them were compelled to attack and destroy the local municipal government office building, and a young worker killed himself by kerosene fire in protest. The condition of the poor along with that of teenage prostitutes was inhuman, miserable and cruel. In the mean time, the gap between the haves and the have-nots was getting wider just as "miraculously" as the GNP grew.⁷

⁶ Kang, 19.

⁷ Hyun, 84-85. In fact, the economic development plans set forth in 1962 have dramatically changed the structure of Korean society. They have brought a general transition in every aspect of the life and values of the Korean people under the slogan of "Modernization." Modernization is also known as "Westernization" or "Industrialization" in reality. Because of this plan, in 1969 the Korean society reached a climaxing GNP growth rate of 15.9%. However, during the 1960s 350,000 to 400,000 of the rural population migrated to urban or industrial areas each year. Almost all of the uprooted farmers settled on mountain slopes or hills in and around big cities, quickly forming squatter areas. With the migration of this rural population, some big cities such as Seoul experienced an unexpected population explosion as shown in the table below:

The first activities of the Urban Industrial Mission began in the early 1960s.⁸ Through this mission, serious Christians volunteered to work at least six months as evangelists and laborers in the urban industrial complex. Engaged in these mission activities, they were immediately faced with the injustices and unconscionable working conditions and saw the struggle for social justice as part of their apostolate. One Korean theologian states,

the mission workers learned the depth of the people's suffering and agony, the intensity of their aspirations, their infinite patience and abundant wisdom to survive in the midst of such an impossible reality.⁹

While the Korean Christians' decisive social involvement in the human rights movement in the 1960s and the 1970s was beginning, one memorable event in particular provoked the Churches and Christians to be more actively and directly

	1960	1966	1970	1975
Total population of Korea	24,989	29,193	31,466	34,707
Population of Seoul (Ratio)	(9.8)	(13.0)	(17.6)	(19.9)
Population of Metropolitan	5,194	6,911	8,894	10,929
Seoul (Ratio)	(20.8)	(23.7)	(28.3)	(31.5)

Source: KDI (Korea Development Institution), 1976
(Unit: 1,000 people, %)

In addition, during the period from 1972-1979, the Korean economy recorded a great growth in volume, and the structure of the national economy was transformed from one based mostly on light industry to one based on heavy and chemical industries. Figured in current price, the GNP of Korea was \$7,6 billion in 1970, and \$58.1 billion in 1979. See Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, 25.

⁸ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 7.

⁹ Boo Woong Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism: Its History and Theology (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988), 194.

involved in social and political reforms. The event was the incident of Chun Tae-il who burned himself to death as protest against the terrible working conditions and unfair treatment of his employers.¹⁰ After this event, the Church and Korean Christians became more seriously concerned and actively involved in socio-political issues of the Korean context in the 1960s and the 1970s.

From these experiences of suffering and oppression, Minjung theology was articulated as a response to the socio-political reality of the Korean context. Not only the Christians and the mission workers but also many laborers, farmers, college students, and intellectuals began to rethink the role of Christianity as it related to the experiences of

¹⁰ Chun Tae-il was born into a poor family in Taegue on August 26, 1948. From the age of eight, he worked as a peddler, a shoeshine boy, and a newspaper boy. He never finished grade school. At the age of 16, he was employed by a sewing machine shop in the Peace Market in Seoul. There were about 20,000 sewing machine operators there, mostly women. The workers' average age was 18, and about half of them were between 1 and 15 years of age. They worked 15 hours a day but were poorly paid - their wages amounted to the sum of money that the owners of the shops spent for lunch. Their working conditions were miserable: no sunlight and no fresh air were available. In order to improve the working conditions and pay, Chun tried to organize a labor union. In March 1969 he was fired. Chun was determined to protest against the dehumanization of workers at the Peace Market. He made a resolution to give himself up for the cause of his poor brothers and sisters. He went back to the Peace Market and started to organize the labor union again. He organized the group to march on the Peace Market. The protestors were blocked, however, and dispersed by police. Chun then poured gasoline on his body and lit it. He died shouting, "Do not exploit the young lives! Let me not die in vain." He died at the age of 22. Chun gave his life following the Minjung. Jung Young Lee, "The Story of Chun, Tae-il: A True Story," in An Emerging Theology in World Perspective, 57.

the oppression and the injustice of the socio-economic situation. They struggled, discussed, and reread the Bible from the perspective of their experiences. Finally they "asked the theologians in Korea to help them in their work by providing them with theological rationale (even if critical) and/or by participating in their work."¹¹

A few Korean theologians began to articulate for the first time Minjung theology through the experiences of the Korean people from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. Minjung theology, finally, became a theological foundation of many Christians' social activities as well as a direction for many Korean progressive churches during that time, as well as into the future.

Methodology of the Theology

Like any other contextual theology, Minjung theology is the accumulation and articulation of theological reflections on the experiences of Korean Christian workers. However, Minjung theology has its own unique way of theological articulation in comparison to that of other Third World theologies. Even though Minjung theology emerged from the socio-political context of Korea in the 1970s, Minjung theology is not limited only to the socio-political realm of the 1970s in its articulation. Minjung theology is a continuation of earlier Korean history and the socio-political hermeneutic of the Minjung's struggle throughout Korea's

¹¹ Hyun, 85.

history. In other words, Minjung theologians have tried to find historical paradigm which would account for the emergence of the Minjung's political oppression, economic exploitation, cultural alienation, and ignorance of humanism throughout Korean history.

Minjung theology is based on the total history of the struggle of the Minjung. This is the reason that Minjung theology is often called the "social biography of the Korean Minjung."¹² Minjung theology, for instance, finds a paradigm in the most important acts of God in the liberation of the Minjung through the Tonghak Peasant Revolutionary Uprising (1876-1896). Minjung theologians regard this movement as the prototype of all liberating messianic movements. The Uprising took place against an oppressive Japanese rule and it was a Minjung revolt against tyranny. In Minjung theologians' view, the Uprising is almost identical to the revolt of the Jewish slaves against the Pharaoh's rule. Thus, the Tonghak Movement and Ch'ondogyo has become very important in Minjung theology as a core paradigm for constructing the theology.

Observing Korean history from the Minjung perspective, the Minjung are classified as the economically poor, politically oppressed, and socially alienated because in Korea there has always existed a social structural problem. Nam Dong Suh speaks of the problematic social system that has existed throughout Korean history:

¹² Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 15.

(iii) The rule of Royal family and the Aristocracy: The era of the Three kingdoms during which the king, the king's family and the queen's family monopolized the power to rule

(viii) Appearance of the Sadaibu [scholar-bureaucrat]: From the end of Koryo to the beginning of Chosen, the Sadaibu emerged from among the local landlords whose social status was lower than that of the Musin [the military faction of the aristocracy] nobility

(ix) Establishment of the Yangban [Bureaucratic nobility of Yi Dynasty] society: The beginning of Chosen, the Sadaibu held official posts, both civil and military, and in this period became part of ruling class

(xiv) The Beginning of Nation-State and the Imperial Invasion of Japan - from the Independence Association of March 1st Movement (1919): Through the movement of Independence Association whose members were mostly intellectuals, merchants and industrialists, and through Tonghak Peasant Revolutionary Uprisings, the Minjung emerged as an integral part of ruling society.

(xvi) The Growth of Democracy - from National Liberation to the April 1960 Student Revolution. Due to Minjung 's participation in the movement, the nation became a democratic country.¹³

Although, Minjung were not of a wealthy class nor the ruling class, Minjung theology never ignored their constant and extraordinary power, and their own common and mass culture. The power was enough to change the corrupted and decayed social values and systems. From this point of view, Minjung theology regards the Minjung as "the subjects of history."¹⁴

¹³ Nam Dong Suh, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung," in Minjung Theology, 168-70.

¹⁴ Here, in the expression "Minjung as the subjects of history," "Minjung" is defined as a living reality which is dynamic, changing and complex in concrete history. Even though the Minjung are economically poor, politically oppressed, and socially deprived, they are culturally and historically rich and powerful. This cultural and historical abundance is called the dominant Minjung culture or Seomin (the common or ordinary people) culture.

In terms of the unique social background of Korean history, Minjung theology could not be identical with Black, Latin, African, or any other Asian theology. Yong Bock Kim says that "Minjung reality is known only through its biography, its story, its hope, and its suffering."¹⁵ Put simply, Minjung theology tries to explain the present contextual suffering and struggle in terms of the history of the Minjung and their suffering throughout Korean history. This way of explanation is not understood as a concept but the story of experience deriving from the Minjung's history.

Like Latin American Liberation theology, one can say that Minjung theology explicitly uses a Marxist analysis of social and economic categories. Regarding this, "it is allied more with the ideology of Marxism than that of capitalism" in order to analyze the existing structure of the oppressed and suffering.¹⁶ However, Minjung and the proletariat have a subtle difference: different views of history. Although Latin American theologies have said much about the liberation of the poor, the form and the content of the theologies do not reflect much on Latin Americans' history and the Minjung's culture. Latin American theologians are "strongly influenced by Marxism, and thus they are suspicious that poor people's

¹⁵ Yong Bock Kim, "Messiah and Minjung," in Minjung Theology, 183-94.

¹⁶ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 18.

religion is just opium."¹⁷ To sum up, the uniqueness of Minjung theology is characterized by at least two points: first, the socio-political biography of the historical Minjung in Korean history is the key frame of reference for articulating Minjung theology; second, although Minjung theology seems to use Marxist social analysis or is allied with the ideology of Marxism, Minjung theology classifications have to be differentiated from Marxist classifications such as the proletariat.¹⁸

Distinctive Characteristics of the Theology

As for the distinctive characteristics of Minjung theology, there are many more important elements of its theological articulation. However, the following two characteristics are the most important elements among the many: first, Han is the Minjung experience, and second, the Jesus-Event is an archetype.

First of all, Minjung theology presents the Minjung as "Han-ridden" people. In Minjung theology, the true meaning of theology lies in resolving this Han, which is accumulated as the cluster of suffering experiences. Seen as innocent victims of oppressive socio-political structures, as well as constant foreign invasions, Korean Minjung constantly keep a repressive feeling of unjust suffering which seeks just retaliation. Concerning the accumulation of Han, Cyris H.

¹⁷ Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism, 202.

¹⁸ Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism, 205.

Moon says,

Han is a hallmark of the Korean Minjung. Koreans have a troubled social biography which stretches back for centuries. They have suffered repeated foreign invasion and internal exploitation. For 36 years, they endured humiliation under Japanese colonial rule. National emancipation in 1945 did not improve the situation at all. The nation was divided into two hostile parts by the two super-powers for their own selfish interests. The tragedies brought about by the national division are beyond description. Here in lies the complex nature of Han of the Korean Minjung. As a people of small and weak nation, they hate and resent the wrongs done to them by the surrounding nations.¹⁹

Not only from external motivation but also from internal motivation, Korean Minjung have continuously suffered with Han. Nam Dong Suh also describe the motivations of Han as follows:

(1) Koreans have suffered numerous invasions by surrounding powerful nations (2) Koreans have continually suffered the tyranny of the rulers (3) Also, under Confucianism's strict imposition of laws and customs discriminating against women, the existence of woman was han itself. (4) At a certain point in Korean history, about half of the population were registered as hereditary slaves and were treated as property rather than as people of the nation. These thought of their lives is Han.²⁰

Reflecting on the Minjung's biography, Han has become a symbol of the Minjung in Minjung theology. Throughout Korean history, Han has also been interpreted as ugliness,

¹⁹ Cyris H. Moon, "Minjung Theology: An Introduction," Pacific Theological Review 18 (1985): 6-7, as quoted in Choi, Holistic Theology for Holistic Evangelism in Korea, 81.

²⁰ Nam Dong Suh, "Toward a Theology of Han," in Minjung Theology, 55-56.

shamefulness or even sinfulness by the ruling class, and it has been suppressed socially, politically, and institutionally. Han has accumulated, "inherited and transmitted, boiling in the blood of the people, which is also defined as the emotional core of anti-regime action."²¹ Han is the outgrowth of unwarranted suffering and also is the experience of the Minjung in the Korean context throughout history. Minjung theology, thus, tries to liberate the Minjung from their Han and to resolve their unresolved feelings due to injustice and oppression. However, Han cannot be resolved without justice. As long as injustice exists, Han cannot be eradicated.²²

²¹ Nam Dong Suh, "Toward a Theology of Han," 56-60. Here, Suh also illustrates the meaning of Han from somewhat current stories. Here, a story can be summarized: Ms. Kim was a skilled employee of Y. H. Trading Company. She joined the Y. H. Trade Union, a branch of the National Textile Trade Union, to combat the inhumane treatment and injustice done to employees. On August 9, 1979, 200 union members, including Ms. Kim, went to the New Democratic Party building to ask the government to work out a fair solution to the imprisonment of their union leader and the announced closing of their factory. On August 11, 1000 policemen intervened and dispersed the union members. During the police action, Ms. Kim was killed. She was only 21 years old and a member of the executive committee of the union. According to the letter she left to her mother and younger brother, she had, during her eight years at the factory, experienced innumerable nosebleeds from exhaustion, worked three months without being paid, and struggled with near-starvation and inadequate clothing, and worked without heat in winter. Yet she believed in the power of the labor movement. Her death embodied the Han of eight million Korean workers.

²² According to Nam Dong Suh, the only way of resolving the Han is to accept the dialectical philosophy of Dan. Dan means to resolve the Han of Minjung by "cutting the chain of the circulation of Han for the transformation of the secular world and secular attachments." In Suh's opinion, Dan has two

Han as the important theme of Minjung theology is from the Minjung's experience. However, Minjung theology tends to drive out Han which is caused by the injustice of the ruling group. Therefore, the act of liberation becomes the central focus of Minjung theology from the meaning of Han.

Second, Minjung theology "is based upon the historical Jesus-event, while traditional Western theology is based upon the kerygma."²³ Minjung theology, in fact, rejects undue emphasis on the sophisticated Christology of traditional Western doctrine. According to Minjung theologians, the historical Jesus-event took place in Korea through the presence of a living Christ.²⁴ In Minjung theology, the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the Minjung Ochlos of Mark have a very close connection to the meaning of Minjung.²⁵ The Jesus-event is a liberating event. Whenever there is a liberating event, there is the presence of the

dimensions: self denial at a personal level and a curtailing of the vicious circle of revenge at a social level. This philosophical theory was quoted from the central idea of Innaech'on (humanity is heaven), which is a core doctrine of Ch'ondogyo in Korea. The theory was introduced again in the current situation by a famous poet, Chi Ha Kim. See Nam Dong Suh, "Toward a Theology of Han," 61.

²³ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 11.

²⁴ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 11.

²⁵ In Minjung theology, theologians, particularly Byung Mu Ahn, define the Ochlos in the Bible as the Minjung of Galilee during the time of the historical Jesus. According to him, in the Gospel, especially Mark, there are 36 occurrences of the word Ochlos. See Byung Mu Ahn, 136-51.

living Christ.²⁶ This historical Jesus-event provided a very important inspiration to the articulation of Minjung theology.

According to Byung Mu Ahn, a famous Minjung theologian, Jesus sided with the Ochlos and taught them.²⁷ Jesus responded to the suffering of the sick, hungry, and oppressed Minjung Ochlos. Hungry and sick Minjung always gathered around Jesus. Jesus "ignored the Sabbath Law and the Purity Law to heal the maimed, the blind, the lame, the crippled, the paralyzed, and the lepers."²⁸ He shared bread with hungry Minjung, feeding five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus never "rebukes these Ochlos persons who are called sinners; rather he rebukes only those who criticize and attack the Minjung Ochlos."²⁹ All these behaviors were historical events around Jesus. Byung Mu Ahn's article "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark" makes a sharper presentation of this notion of the Jesus-event as well as the notion of Ochlos and Minjung.

Looking into the Jesus-event, Ahn tries to see the audience and object of Jesus' teaching. Not much attention

²⁶ Jung Young Lee, "Minjung Theology," 12.

²⁷ Byung Mu Ahn, 150.

²⁸ Jae Soon Park, 65.

²⁹ Byung Mu Ahn, 139. Ahn regards Ochlos as Minjung. According to him, the Ochlos are contrasted with the ruling class of Jerusalem who attacked and criticized Jesus as their enemy. The Ochlos took an anti-Jerusalem position and were clearly on the side of Jesus. In this connection, it is important to note that they were the Minjung of Galilee.

has been paid to the social character of Jesus' audience. According to Ahn, to understand the historical Jesus-event, one needs to see the total social structure and the place of the people surrounding Jesus. From this point of view, Ahn posits that Mark called Minjung the Ochlos (Mark 2:17b). In a word, the historical Jesus-event is the archetype of all other liberation events, and this archetype of the liberation struggle is manifested in Korea through the presence of the Living Christ, embodied in the Minjung movement. Therefore, the story of the historical Jesus-event has also become an important theme for Minjung theology.

Elements of Preaching

As illustrated in the above section, during the last three decades Minjung theology has become an accumulation and formulation of Korean Minjung experiences, such as struggle, pain, agony, frustration, and despair, as well as hopes and aspirations in the midst of the Korean socio-political context. As a theological articulation of the experiences, Minjung theology has become a practical theology of preaching in the pulpits of many Korean churches, especially in the progressive denominations.

In Korean churches, kerygmatic and didactic preaching styles are dominant in terms of making three point expository sermons. However, the preaching of Minjung theology is clearly different from these typical types of Korean preaching. The distinctive elements of Minjung theological preaching includes

the following elements: (1) prophetic preaching relating to the issues of the socio-political context, (2) topical preaching, and (3) preaching as a way of storytelling.

First of all, prophetic preaching is possibly the most prominent element of the preaching of Minjung theology. Unlike the dominant conservative Korean churches, the preachers of Minjung theology preach sermons regarding socio-political issues. Even though the preachers have been aware of the possibility of harassment, arrest, and imprisonment, preachers of Minjung theology boldly addressed the necessity of involvement in the issues of the Korean context, especially the issues against the dictatorships. In order to get the congregations to become actively involved in socio-political issues, the preachers used prophetic sermons as much as possible. In fact, this prophetic preaching became very irritating to the military regimes.³⁰ Preachers constantly presented the sermons from Minjung theological views, prophetic sermons focusing on socio-political justice issues rather than doctrinal, didactic, or pastoral issues. Concerning preaching, Nam Dong Suh writes of the necessity to be prophetic.

³⁰ In the midst of the strong internal opposition to Park's military regime during the 1970s, Korean conservative churches and the Korean Campus Crusade for Christ had a very good partnership with the military regimes. In particular, this politico-religious partnership sponsored conservative evangelization in the South Korean army, presidential prayer breakfasts modeled on those of President Nixon, and the Billy Graham Crusade of 1973. See Eric O. Hanson, Catholic Politics in China and Korea (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1980), 98.

In this historical situation, what does it mean to be called to participate in the Missio Dei? I am not suggesting you give up the priestly role of the church. However, that is theologically mistaken. Those who are witnessed to the Gospel must be not only priests but also prophets as well.³¹

As Black preaching and the preaching of liberation is "conditioned by sociology, economics, government, and culture,"³² the preaching of Minjung theology also is affected by the socio-political conditions of the Korean context. The oppression and dehumanization by the brutal military regime provoked the church to prophetic preaching and theological insights. And the poverty and injustice of the socio-economic structure resulting from the military regime's misguided policies also made the pastors prepare prophetic sermons with the new Minjung biblical hermeneutic. In the midst of the socio-political suffering, preachers of Minjung theology began to re-read the Bible from the Minjung perspective, and in their pulpits they also began to call for the liberation of the Minjung. Theologians as well as preachers tried to find the image of the Minjung in their reading of the Bible, and they met the Minjung in terms of the stories about Hebrew slaves in Egypt and the Ochlos in the

³¹ Nam Dong Suh, Minjung Shinhakeui Tamgu [Exploration of Minjung theology] (Seoul: Hankilsa, 1983), 43.

³² Henry H. Mitchell, Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 123.

Gospel.³³ As a result of these biblical insights, preachers began to claim that Christians and the church should not be separated from the issues of the socio-political society but rather be involved in changing the society. Therefore, rediscovery of these biblical insights made preaching become more prophetic in nature.

Concerning the contextual issues, Minjung theologians and preachers stressed the problematic socio-political situation repeatedly in their sermons. They seemed not to be interested in the "religious matter of official religion supporting the structures of oppression, but . . . in those structures supporting that religion which it finds most useful."³⁴ They were interested in an effort to resolve the Minjung's Han with the dynamic energy required for the structural and spiritual transformation of the society. They were interested in social and political concerns and reforms, and many of the preachers also emphasized the individual dimensions of salvation.

Secondly, along with addressing the vital socio-political dimensions in light of biblical insight the preaching of Minjung theology was topical. They addressed the topics of peace and unification of North and South Korea. Even though the preachers could be labeled as procommunist and could be

³³ See Cyris H. Moon, "An Old Testament Understanding of Minjung"; and Byung Mu Ahn, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," in Minjung Theology.

³⁴ Justo L. Gonzalez and Catherine G. Gonzalez, Liberation Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 70.

put in jail, the preaching emphasized "the immediate symptom the listeners encountered in day-to-day living."³⁵ Byung Saeng Chun's sermon "Choose Life" (Deut. 30:15-19) is a good example of a topical sermon touching on the sensitive issues of Korean unification and nuclear weapons.

Today humankind is competing to make more powerful and more dangerous nuclear weapons that could completely wipe out the whole human race on earth. What does the Scripture say to us? To choose a way of reconciliation and peaceful unification between North and South is a way of life but to choose the way of the nuclear weapons is to choose death for the Korean people at this historical moment Even though our land is loaded with nuclear missile warheads and weapons, we do not have any concern and sensitivity. Rather we are brainwashed that more US nuclear weapons in our land will guarantee our national security We should repent from our hatred and cold war mentality, and seek the way of reconciliation and peaceful unification. That is the way of choosing life, and that is the will of God.³⁶

Vital issues of the Korean context caused Minjung preaching to become topical, and preaching mostly took on an inductive process. This inductive process was quite different from the typical three point sermons with a deductive process that most Korean preachers of traditional theologies have used.³⁷ Put simply, from the concrete experiences of socio-

³⁵ Ronald J. Allen, Preaching the Topical Sermon (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 7.

³⁶ Byung Saeng Chun, "Sarmeui Seontaek" [Choose life], in Hankukui Kangdan [Korean pulpit], ed. Gap Shik Sung (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1987), 331-33, as quoted in Chi Young Kay, 115.

³⁷ In deductive preaching, the preacher announces the three points of the sermon at the beginning and then develops the main points in particular ways. The three main points are

political conditions, the preaching of Minjung theology has taken on the form of topical sermons on specific issues of Korea.

Finally, the preaching of Minjung theology uses the stories of the suffering Minjung. The stories include not only the stories of the Bible, such as "the recorded stories of slaves, the poor, the oppressed, and the persecuted," but also the stories of the Korean Minjung throughout the history.³⁸ Here, in Minjung theology, the stories of the people in the Bible are regarded in the same way as the stories of the suffering of the Korean Minjung. Minjung theology asserts that God has been working for liberation not only in the midst of biblical people but also in the midst of all Minjung who have been suffering throughout Korean history.

Just as Latin American Liberation theologies and Black theologies have presented good examples of storytelling prior to Minjung theology, telling the stories of the Minjung, such as the laborers, the prostitutes, broken farmers, and others who have been oppressed, exploited, and alienated in the process of modernization and industrialization during the past, has become a very good way of preaching. Moreover, the

based upon absolute truth which dominates that theological enterprise. See Allen, 11.

³⁸ Yong Bock Kim, "Minjung Social Biography and Theology," Asia Journal of Theology 1 (1987): 523. Here, Minjung theology contains two types of stories: one coming from the biblical tradition and another from the Korean socio-political context of the Minjung.

stories of students who were court-martialed and of professors who experienced harassment, arrest, interrogation, trial, and imprisonment also provide good illustrations for preaching. All the stories throughout Korean history contain good content for Minjung preaching "not merely to make their sermons clearer or more interesting but also because such stories show how the Christian faith can be embodied in the actual circumstances of life" in the Korean context.³⁹

Because all Minjung stories illuminate the socio-political reality of the Korean context, the preaching of Minjung theology addresses how God works in history and what God required of people in Korea during the dark periods. From these specific illustrations, the preaching of Minjung theology has helped the Korean Christians to hear and see the Christian tradition (biblical and church history) and the Korean Minjung tradition -- the perspective of the outcast, the powerless, the oppressed, and the marginalized.⁴⁰

Storytelling preaching is very effective and as powerful or more powerful than any other type of sermon, particularly for the purpose of socio-political transformation. It is also the Minjung's constructive way of communication. The preaching of Minjung theology has also addressed the genuine socio-political concern about human rights, justice,

³⁹ Thomas G. Long, The Witness of Preaching (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 37.

⁴⁰ David Tracy, The Analogical Imagination (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1981), 398.

liberation, peace, and the unification of the Korean societies. In terms of prophetic preaching, topical preaching, and storytelling preaching, the preachers of Minjung theology have strived to proclaim God's love to the Korean Minjung and to pursue the liberation of the Minjung in the Korean context.

CHAPTER 4

An Analysis of Tochakwha Theology

The Theology

Members of the Korean Association of Accredited Theological Schools and the scholars who participated in the Centennial Theologians Conference of Korea in 1984 stated:

We realize that, in the last one hundred years, Korean theology has developed in the rich soil of Korean culture which is entirely different from the Western Christian culture. As we have done in the past, we shall continue to interpret the Christian gospel in the Korean language and Korean culture in order to indigenize the Gospel in Korean soil. It is unavoidable that we proclaim the Word of God in Korean language and do theology in the context of the Korean culture [and religions].¹

As the above declaration asserts, Korean theology, particularly Tochakwha theology has developed in "the rich soil" of Korean cultures and religions. In order to "indigenize the Gospel in Korean soil," many frontier theologians have also spent their energies in order to reinterpret the Gospel more effectively on the basis of traditional Korean cultures and religions. Although they have often confronted obstacles and/or criticism doing their way of theology, the theologians of Tochakwha theology have

¹ "Declaration of Korean Theologians," East Asia Journal of Theology 3 (1985): 290-92. The conference was held in Seoul from the 10th to the 13th of October 1984. This was to celebrate the Centennial year of Korean Protestant churches. The conference theme was "History and Theology." The statement was made on 13th October 1984.

contributed to providing indigenized forms and paradigms of theological articulation. To analyze Tochakwha theology as another dimension of the contextual theology in Korea, attention will be paid to the examination of the emergent background, the theological controversy in the 1960s, and the distinctive characters of the theology.

Emergent Background of the Theology

Like Minjung theology, there are at least two specific motivations for the development of Tochakwha theology from the 1960s: (1) the external elements of nationalism and emerging theologies as well as theological element, and (2) the internal element of the (Indigenization) Theological Controversy of the 1960s in Korea.

First of all, the realization of nationalism in Korea led to an atmosphere of discussing Tochakwha theology in the 1960s. The experiences of many foreign invasions, including the recent Japanese colonialism and the tendency of nationalism in Third World countries against "the new spiritual imperialism in the name of evangelization of Western Christianity," caused a serious rethinking about the independent identities of politics as well as culture.²

During the period of the 1960s, Korea became increasingly aware of her own history and culture, and the Korean people adapted the term "nationalism" or Minjok Jucheseong (national consciousness) to use not only in the political sense but also

² Hutchison, 92.

in the cultural-religious sense. According to Se Yoon Kim, a Korean theologian, under the modernization policies of the military government, Korean military dictators strongly felt the necessity of rehabilitating old traditions and customs in order to support their dictatorships.³ As is well known, the old Korean culture such as the Confucianistic culture, is a very strict and hierarchical culture; thus, the culture is very beneficial in supporting the dictatorship's strong authority.

Similarly, within the Korean church, the resurgence of a national consciousness stirred a latent self-consciousness that was already developing strongly in the life and mission of the church. At the same time Korean theologians, as well as churches, became alert to the importance of the tradition and culture within which it developed. Amid all this, and with its Western origin, "the church began a new self-examination aimed at seeking its own identity as a body fully Korean and fully Christian."⁴

Second, under the above external conditions, Tochakwha theology was formulated in a concrete way by the process of Korean theologians' controversy on the issue of indigenization during the 1960s. This theological controversy was initiated by Methodist scholars who had a somewhat liberal theology.

³ Se Yoon Kim, Kidokkyowa Hankuk Munhwa [Christianity and Korean culture] (Seoul: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 8.

⁴ Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism, 166.

The controversy began from the period of the early 1960s and rapidly became an epoch-making turning point in the history of Korean theology. The most important issue of the controversy was the concept of the cultural identity of Korean Christians in the midst of the process of Westernization. Thus, the hermeneutics of the Gospel (Gospel's context) as a heathen culture and Korean's own religious tradition and historical background became a pivotal issue.

In the beginning the controversy was raised by the two Methodist theologians, Tongshik Ryu and Sung Bum Yun, in 1962 and 1963.⁵ Even though these two theologians differ in their theological backgrounds, both of them define the relation between Gospel and culture as that of seed and soil on the basis of the principle of the incarnation of Logos. They assert that "foreign religion [Christianity] is the seed and that the native culture is the soil in which the seed of the foreign religion is to grow."⁶

⁵ Tongshik Ryu was born in 1922 and was the first to launch the (Tochakwha) theological debate. He studied at the School of Theology of Boston University. He also began to teach at the Methodist Theological Seminary in 1952. In 1973, he completed his doctorate at the School of Theology at Tokyo University and taught at Yonsei University until his retirement. He was especially interested in the Korean folk religions, including Korean Shamanism. Sung Bum Yun was born in 1916, studied at Doshisha University in Japan and completed his doctorate at Basel under Karl Barth. He taught at the Methodist Theological Seminary from 1946 to 1980. He was especially interested in the theory of Confucianism and was trained by Confucianistic teaching in his youth.

⁶ Tongshik Ryu, Folk Religions and Korean Culture (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1991), 117. According to him, when the seed of the Gospel was removed from the

Upon these theologians' assertions, there arose internal criticism (response) from Methodist theologians, such as Pong Bae Park and Kwang Shik Kim, who were also pressing toward indigenization, as well as external criticism (response) from Presbyterian theologians, such as Kyung Yeon Chun and Pong Rang Park, who were inclined toward Barthianism.⁷ The Barthians maintained the position of revelation theology, that Christians must distinguish revelation from national culture and myth and that the Gospel is the only source of revelation. The Barthians insisted that the culture and folk religion of the nation cannot be regarded as the subject of Christian theology because Christianity does not depend on culture, only on the Bible. Against this Barthian assertion, there arose the criticism that to regard culture as sinful and to maintain a pure Gospel results in a distorted faith and nothing but dualism.⁸

Put simply, throughout the controversy, the theologians of Tohakwha theology became very active disputants and developed the theology of indigenization in the language of Korea. Therefore, the controversy provided a foundation for articulating Tohakwha theology in Korea.

Judaic culture and transplanted to the sphere of Greek culture, the Gospel adapted itself realistically to the situation of Greek culture, removing from itself such essential elements as the regal ceremony of circumcision.

⁷ Sun Hwan Pyun, "Other Religions and Theology," East Asia Journal of Theology 3 (1985): 329.

⁸ Pyun, 329.

Examination of the Controversy in the 1960s

In 1962, Ryu, for the first time, raised the question of self-identity as a problem of indigenization relating to the outreach of the Korean Church in mission. Under the influence of Bultmann's demythologizing model, Ryu argued that the Christian gospel and historical Christianity are two distinctive realities: the gospel is the seed, and the Korean native culture is the soil. He emphasized that the historical Christianity transplanted into Korea from the West is a plant which grew and flowered in Western soil.⁹ Therefore, according to him, indigenization and mission in Korea require:

- (1) a determination of the nature of the gospel and its de-Westernization, or separation from the non-essential Western elements encasing it in Korea; and
- (2) an apprehending of the Korean history and culture in which the gospel seed is to be planted.¹⁰

Regarding the latter assertion, Ryu stressed the necessity of an examination of the folk religions -- Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Ch'ondogyo -- which constitute elements of Korean tradition and culture.¹¹ Ryu also says the task of

⁹ Tongshik Ryu, "The Indigenization of the Gospel and the Missionary Task in Korea," Theological Bulletin, October 1962, 43-58, as quoted in Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism, 167. Ryu was influenced by Handrick Kramer's idea of indigenization and Rudolf Bultmann's theory of demythologizing for the biblical studies.

¹⁰ Ryu, "The Indigenization of the Gospel and the Missionary Task in Korea," 43-58, as quoted in Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism, 167.

¹¹ Ryu, Christian Faith Encounters Religions of Korea, 14.

indigenization is on three levels:

(1) the development of a Korean theology in which the gospel is appropriated and crystallized into a cradle formula framed appropriately within the context of the Korean ethos and culture, (2) the expression of a Korean Christian life style which confesses the faith and witnesses to Christ in such a fashion that a new Korean culture is formed. (3) the reformation of the church, with a life and structure appropriate to the Korean reality in which it is manifested.¹²

In response to Ryu's assertion, Kyung Yeon Chun, who took a position based on Barth's theology, insisted that Christian faith does not begin from cultural dimension or phenomenon, but from religion itself, for it begins with human response to the revelation of God in Christ. He says,

Faith and culture must be separated and distinguished wherever and whenever the Gospel is proclaimed. This implies that the native culture first must be refused or reduced to an ash by the power of the Word. Then the culture of the people must be reoriented in the light of the Gospel The task of Korean Christians, therefore, lies in translating the content of faith which has already been theologically expressed in the form of Western culture because Western culture is the true manifestation of the content of the Christian faith.¹³

To Chun's criticism, Ryu responded quickly that the Western Christian and the Korean Christian could be different in terms of their expressions of "Koreanness" and

¹² Ryu, "The Indigenization of the Gospel and the Missionary Task in Korea," 43-58, as quoted in Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism, 167-68.

¹³ Kyung Yeon Chun, "Can Christian Culture be Indigenized?," Kidokkyosasang [Christian thought], May 1963, 27.

"Westernness" (selfhood or self-consciousness of Koreans and Westerners). Therefore, the Christianity of Korea should not be a mere imitation of nor a direct transplantation of Western Christianity with its culture and the tradition. Ryu stressed this point of view:

Indigenization does not propose to change the essence of the Gospel. Indigenization is only a name for the methodology which tries to find how the transcendent truth can live and how the life power of that truth can work in a particular and concrete historical reality. The way in which the gospel transcends the nation yet saves it is the problem of missionary methodology Historical Christianity has been acculturated in a particular cultural environment and from the necessity of making that Christianity appropriate to another cultural environment.¹⁴

In terms of the issue of indigenization, Ryu was more actively involved in the theological concern of Tohakwha over against that of the imported Western form of Christianity and culture. After all, he strived to articulate his own theology, P'ung-ryu theology, throughout the controversy, which is "the way for the realization of the cultural ideal" for the Korean people.¹⁵

¹⁴ Tongshik Ryu, "An Understanding of the Indigenization of Christianity," Kidokkyosasang [Christian Thought], April 1963, 214, as quoted in Yoo, Korean Pentecostalism, 169-70.

¹⁵ Tongshik Ryu, "Culture and Theology in Korea: The P'ung-ryu Theology," East Asia Journal of Theology 3 (1985): 320. P'ung-ryu theology became a good paradigm of Korean Tohakwha theology. According to Ryu, in the third century the ancient Koreans customarily offered sacrifices to their Heavenly God in the spring and in the autumn. Their ceremonies, which consisted of drinking, singing, and dancing, brought the participants to a state of ecstasy in which they were believed to experience union with God. By thus becoming one with God who controls both heaven and earth, they could

During the controversy in 1963, Yun also began to involve himself in the controversy from a very philosophical perspective. He suggested that the Dankoon Myth is a part of a philosophical background which provides Koreans with a pre-understanding for the Christian Trinitarian doctrine of Western Christianity. Yun, in his controversial writings, proposed that Whanin, Whanwoong, and Whangom signify God, and he reads the signs of the trinity in the Dankoon Myth.¹⁶ In response to Yun's proposal, Chun again reacted and charged that between the Christian doctrine of God and the Dankoon Myth there is neither similarity nor connection. He suspected Yun's motive for advocating indigenization and warned of its consequences:

The intention of Dr. Yun's emphasis on the Myth is to recognize the existence of the Korean nation as a power and to promote the power of national culture with which he attempts to confront Christian tradition. This clearly indicates that he wants to place the self-asserting national culture over the redemptive history of God found in biblical faith Recent history reminds us that this kind of force which collaborates with the political self-claim of a nation easily becomes either anti-Semitic

through God's power realize their desire for a prosperous and happy life. In the thought of the ancient Koreans, this was the way of deliverance from the hardships and suffering of life. The belief was sublimated with the medium of Chinese culture and became what is called P'ung-ryu or P'ung-ryu-do.

¹⁶ Sung Bum Yun, "Whanin, Whanwoong, Whangom is Namely God," Sasanggye [The thought], (May 1963): 402-06. Besides adapting Dankoon Myth for doing Tochakwha theology, Yun attempted to find "the shadow of the Trinity of God as the original-I (Ur-Ich), that is, God's original power (Ur-macht), original spirit (Ur-geist), and original will (Ur-wille) as presented in the Korean Neo-Confucian philosophy." See also Pyun, 328-29 and Ki-baik Lee, 217-18.

or anti-Christian.¹⁷

On the criticism by Chun, Yun affirmed that the Dankoon Myth is more nearly saga than myth and that the saga provides a foundation of a Korean understanding of the Triune God. He also explained that the saga is possible to show historically and philosophically that the idea of Dankoon has arisen from a Christian understanding. The saga is Vestigium Trinitatis (a vestige, or trace of the trinity) and "a Korean formula for the God concept."¹⁸

The controversy was heated to some degree and was carried on in many articles.¹⁹ Among these articles, the most creative effort of Tochakwha theology has come from Yun. Yun, indeed, tried to find a Korean pre-understanding for Christianity in traditional Korean thought, reading

¹⁷ Kyung Yeon Chun, "The so-called Pre-understanding and the Dankoon Myth," Kidokkyosasang [Christian thought], Aug.-Sep. 1963, 23-24.

¹⁸ Sung Bum Yun, "The Dankoon Myth is the Vestigium Trinitatis," Kidokkyosasang [Christian thought], Oct. 1963, 17. According to Yun, the Dankoon concept originated in Mongolia as Tengri (heaven or light), and was transformed into the idea of Cheon (heaven) in China. For that reason, Nestorian Christians in China in the seventh to tenth centuries translated "God" by the word Cheonju (the Lord of Heaven). When Koreans accepted Christianity, the concept of God was translated into Hananim (Majestic Being of Heaven) which is reflected in the idea of Dankoon. From this point of view, Yun claims, the Dankoon Myth provides sufficient ideas (proof) for the understanding of the doctrine of God.

¹⁹ Many eminent Korean theologians, Myung Kwan Chi, Yong Ok Kim, Chul Ha Han, Chung Jun Kim, and Jong Seong Lee, presented articles concerning the issue of indigenization during this time. See Kwang Shik Kim, Tochakwhawa Heaseokhak [Indigenization and hermeneutics] (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1987), 35-55.

Christianity into it. Whereas, Ryu has taken a different approach. Ryu has sought a pre-understanding of Christianity in Korea's traditional religions.

At any rate, throughout the theological controversy of indigenization during the 1960s, there has been an encounter between the Christian identity (or national identity) and Korean culture (or religious traditions). The controversy also, provided not only the realization of the Korean Christian's identity (de-Westernization) but also the elimination of certain forms of religious expressions relating to the Christian mission of Western imperialism. Regarding all these facts, examples will be illustrated in the following section.

Distinctive Characteristics of the Theology

The controversy of indigenization in the 1960s was an epoch-making turning point in the history of Korean theology. In terms of this controversy, Tochakwha theology was formed in a melting pot together with Korean's non-Christian cultural and religious traditions and historical background. However, in comparison with other Korean contextual theologies such as Minjung theology, Tochakwha theology has at least two unique and distinctive characteristics: first, the attempt to incorporate Christianity and traditional Korean culture (and thoughts) and second, the attempt at dialogue with other religions and Christian theologies.

First of all, for Tochakwha theology the most distinctive

characteristic is to include in the explanation of Korean Christianity in terms of Korean oriented culture and thought. For example, Yun proposed that the pre-understanding of Seong (a Chinese term which means "sincerity" taken from Korean Neo-Confucianism as a basic concept in the sixteenth century) could be very useful in achieving a proper understanding of Christianity even among non religious people. Yun asserts,

My proposal is simply that the Gospel should be reinterpreted through the pre-understanding of Seong for our Korean people. It also means, in reverse, the key concept of Seong should be reinterpreted in the light of the Gospel. I am sure that the proclamation of the Gospel will become more meaningful for our people when it is done through the concept of Seong.²⁰

Throughout their long history, Koreans have always had a specific way of looking at their lives, the world, and the rest of reality. This Korean perspective has been generated in terms of Korean indigenous ethos, ideas, soil, and climate. Specifically, popular traditions of religion before Christianity throughout Korean history are ingrained in Korean minds and hearts. Thus, these religious and cultural dimensions for doing theology cannot be ignored. Like Western

²⁰ Sung Bum Yun, "Theology of Sincerity," North East Asia Journal of Theology, Sep. 1970/March 1971, 73. The literal meaning of Seong is the accomplished or fulfilled word. Seong actually is a combination of the two Chinese letters Eon (word) and Seong (becoming). Yun believed that an identical concept of this term is found in the words Jesus spoke at the moment of his death on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Yun tries to connect between the word of Jesus and the idea from Confucius teaching, "sincerity is the way of heaven; doing sincerely is the way of human."

theologians influenced by Western culture and religious ethos, Tochakwha theologians try to recognize their own particular ethos and traditional cultures.

Therefore, open dialogue with the Korean culture and religious traditions and thinking involves an intense attempt to redefine the way of articulating theology. Korean Tochakwha theologians have tried to find the traditional culture and the thought which underlies the indigenous religions in order to have the proper materials for doing their theology. Thus, saga, myth, dancing, drinking, and any traditions of the religious ceremonies can be reexpressed for the understanding of the Christian gospel in the contemporary Korean context. This way of doing theology is one of the distinctive characters of Tochakwha theology.

Another characteristic of Tochakwha theology is the attempt at the dialogue with other religions. Regarding this characteristic, Ryu shows his position regarding the dialogue in his P'ung-ryu theology as follow:

P'ung-ryu-do involved the three religions Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The essence of Confucianism is found in self-denial and a return to decorum, while that of Buddhism is in giving up egoism and returning to the mind of Buddha. Likewise, the essence of Taoism is in leaving all selfishness to live according to the way of nature. When seen this way the three religions are basically the same, for they all center around an element of denial and one of return: denial of the self imprisoned by egoistic attachment and return to the true nature bestowed by Heaven. This is another God-given nature and God's mind, so P'ung-ryu-do which centers around the idea of man uniting with God naturally incorporates the essentials of the three

religions.²¹

As the world becomes one global village, the problem between Christianity and other religions has become an urgent one for doing theology. Protestant as well as Catholic theology is very interested in dealing with the problems of the encounter between Christianity and other religions. Although Barth judged religion as unbelief, many contemporary theologians, such as Hans Kung and Jurgen Moltmann, are projecting a inclusive theology at present. Moltmann emphasizes that

Christianity is more or less present in all nations. But it is frequently only present in its Western form. Indigenous forms must therefore develop, so that an authentic Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, African and Latin American Christianity may grow up with corresponding theologies Indigenous Christianity will enter into dialogue, exchange and mutual co-operation with the respective indigenous religions.²²

From this point of view, the dialogue between Christianity and other religions has been taking place in the form of personal dialogue on the part of Korean Tochakwha theologians. This dialogue is to be considered as an integral part of indigenization. From this dialogue, one can find that there must surely be a peculiarly Eastern way of doing theology, just as the Western theologies have recourse to the Western thought. Sun Hwan Pyun, a famous Korean Tochakwha theologian,

²¹ Ryu, "Culture and Theology in Korea," 311.

²² Jurgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 151.

emphasizes the necessity of dialogue.

In talking about theology in relation to other religions, the most serious problems is how to overcome religious imperialism (or exclusivism), which demonizes and condemns other religions In a situation of religious pluralism, Christianity must give up the past proselytism and should have an open attitude in order to have dialogue with other religions, standing on an equal basis. Especially in the Asian climate where various religions and sects coexist within an absolute tolerance, the exclusive assertion of the absoluteness of Christianity has become a vestige of Western colonial age which only promotes discord.²³

In fact, under the imperialistic condition, Korean Tochakwha theologians such as Yun, Ryu, and Pyun have become the frontier theologians who have tried to sweep off the religious political prejudices of Western theology which are continuing even in the post-colonial age.

Elements of Preaching

While Minjung theology in the 1970s was interested in the analysis of the socio-political dimensions of Korea, Tochakwha theology was interested in the cultural-religious dimensions of Korea and opened up the pluralistic context of Korea. Although, Minjung and Tochakwha theologies are both contextual theologies in Korea, Tochakwha theology is an apologetic and philosophical theology, which the preachers randomly adapt. It is hard to apply the theology of preaching in their pulpit except for the doctrinal preaching.

Unlike Minjung preaching as the prophetic, topical, and

²³ Pyun, 334.

story-telling types, Tochakwha preaching includes didactic, doctrinal, and apologetic preaching. However, the most distinctive character of Tochakwha preaching is based upon the use of the pre-understanding (or concept and thought) of Korean indigenous culture, ritual, tradition, and religion.

First of all, through didactic and doctrinal preaching, Tochakwha theology provides a theology of preaching in terms of supporting the pre-understanding of Korean indigenous culture and tradition. This support is the most remarkable contribution of Korean Tochakwha preachers. In order to teach or explain the specific doctrine or the concept of Christianity, the preachers often cite the pre-understanding of Korean thought, culture, and religious tradition. Thus, this preaching emphasizes recognition. For example, in order to explain Christian Spirituality, Tochakwha preachers use the understanding of the Korean religious term Shin-myung. This term came from the Korean Shamanistic ritual Dae-dong gut.²⁴ However, due to the religious pre-understanding of Shin-myung as spirituality, many Korean churches have surprisingly adopted the name as a name for their church, intentionally calling it a Shin-myung church.²⁵ The term Shin-myung

²⁴ Chung Hee Lee, "Liberation Spirituality in Dea-dong Gut," in Asian Christian Spirituality: Reclaiming Traditions, eds. Virginia Fabella, Peter K. H. Lee, and David K. Suh (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992), 36-43.

²⁵ For example, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea has a church of this name. The Shin-myung church is located at the following address: Garibong 3 Dong 151-6, Guro-Gu, Seoul, Korea.

originally means as follows:

The Shin-myung is a communal force which springs from unknown sources. Therefore, communal Shin-myung is life itself, but this does not refer simply to the survival of life The Shin-myung is the concrete form of freedom in action. It is the enhanced fulfillment of the life energy It is appropriate for us to translate the word "spirituality" with the word Shin-myung or Ki. Ki is also used by the Korean people to denote the energy, the spirit, and the vigor of a person that allows the person to act with zeal and pep.²⁶

Not only the term, but also the cultural ethos can be used for illustration in preaching. For example, the cultural ethos of specific things such as rice for Koreans as well as for all oriental people, can be a good explanation of some teachings. Masao Cakenaka has already used this method in his God is Rice which was published in 1986 by WCC. Tochakwha preachers often use this same way of communication for a sermon. A famous Asian theologian quotes the Korean poem "Heaven is Rice" in his article connecting the Asian cultural and religious ethos. The poem is printed here:

Heaven is rice
As we cannot go to heaven alone
We should share rice with one another
As all share the light of the heavenly stars
We should share and eat rice together
When we eat and swallow rice
Heaven dwells in our body
Rice is heaven
Yes, rice is the matter
We should eat together.²⁷

²⁶ Chung Hee Lee, 41, 43.

²⁷ Chi Ha Kim, "Heaven is Rice," as quoted in Choan-seng Song, "Freedom of Christian Theology for Asian Cultures," Asia Journal of Theology 3 (1989): 85. See also Masao Cakenaka, God is Rice (Geneva: WCC, 1986).

Many religious pre-understandings are used for explaining Christianity. In particular, the understanding of blessing and healing through preaching is extracted very often from the understanding of the indigenous religion, especially Korean Shamanism. For example, even though Yonggi Cho and Ki Dong Kim, famous pentecostal preachers, have very different theological backgrounds from that of Tohakwha theologians, they also preach their sermons in terms of applying the doctrine of other Korean religions into their Christian sermons.²⁸ For instance, when Cho presents a sermon taken from the Bible, 3 John 2,²⁹ Cho often emphasizes the person's blessing of salvation, blessing of wealth, and blessing of health, which also are a major part of Korean Shamanism.³⁰ As a result, Cho's literal interpretation of the Bible appeals very positively to those who have a pre-understanding of Korean Shamanism's view of visible blessings. In Kim's intensive and extensive preaching on 1 John 3:8, he portrays

²⁸ Rev. Yonggi Cho is the senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, which is the largest local church in the world. Rev. Ki Dong Kim is the senior pastor of Seongnak Baptist Church in Seoul. He is very well known for his ministry of exorcism.

²⁹ "Behold, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul" (NRSV).

³⁰ See Yonggi Cho, 29.

Jesus as a powerful exorcist.³¹ When both preach a sermon regarding blessing, healing, and exorcism, it is clear that they try to appeal to the people's religious mind in terms of the pre-understanding of Shamanism in Korea.

Finally, concerning the attempt at dialogue with other religions in Korea, the theology of Tochakwha preaching leans toward apologetic theology. In discussing the "Cosmic Christ" in relation to other religions, this apologetic (or Tochakwha) theology can also be regarded as philosophical theology.³²

The content of Tochakwha theology is interested in matters not only inside but also outside the Church. Specifically, a famous Tochakwha theologian Pyun asserted that "there is also salvation outside the Church."³³ As Pyun's assertion shows, Tochakwha preaching and theology does not marginalize others unlike traditional ecclesiology.³⁴

³¹ "The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of devil" (NRSV). See Ki Dong Kim, Makwiron [Demonology], vol. 3 (Seoul: Seongnak Church, 1986), 251-52.

³² Pyun, 350.

³³ Kwang Shik Kim, 302. Pyun was influenced by Hans Kung's assertion of salvation outside the church. Due to this assertion, many Korean conservative Methodist ministers advised Pyun to withdraw his assertion and to write his own confession of faith in Christ. However, he became more interested in the dialogue between Christianity and other religions.

³⁴ According to Moltmann, traditional ecclesiology has been emphasized by many Christian apologists in terms of the slogan "Outside the church no salvation" since the definition of the Council of Florence in 1442, appealing to Cyprian and Origen. Thus, apologists have generally advocated the way of salvation in relation to the marginalized definition of the traditional ecclesiology (and/or the kingdom of God). See

From the above view, the theology of Tochakwha preaching can also be regarded as situational preaching, in which both the motive and the goal of the sermon are derived from the present pluralistic situation and coexisting cultural problems. Thus, according to Paul Tillich, this apologetic theology (and preaching) is "answering theology," a response to the existential condition of human beings in various cultural and religious traditions.³⁵ At any rate, Tochakwha preaching has contributed to making Korean Christianity stand more closely with the other religions and cultures. In a word, as a contextual theology of preaching, Tochakwha theology has resonated with the Korean cultural and religious context.

Moltmann, 153. However, Pyun and other Tochakwha theologians assert that this exclusivism (imperialism) of Christianity is the most serious problem in a situation of religious pluralism. Pyun emphasizes that "Christianity must give up the past proselytism and should have an open attitude in order to have dialogue with other religions, standing on an equal basis." He stresses further that Korean theology should help Korean Christianity to escape from the Western prejudice against indigenous religions. See Pyun, 334-38.

³⁵ Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 6.

CHAPTER 5

Kobaik kwa Mannam eui Shinhak
(The Theology of Confession and Encounter)
as an Alternative Theology

In previous chapters, this writer has examined two Korean frontier contextual theologies, Minjung theology and Tochakwha theology, in terms of not only their contributions as contextual theologies but also their limitations. Particularly, the polarity between Minjung and Tochakwha theology shows the exclusiveness of the theological concerns of each. Specifically, while Tochakwha theology concentrates on inter-religious and/or cultural dimensions, Minjung theology focuses on the socio-political dimensions of the current Korean context. Therefore, many Korean theologians and preachers have had the desire for an alternative way of "doing theology" which can overcome both theologies' limitations and can include both theologies' merits.¹

In this chapter, this writer will explore an alternative way of theology which is very closely related to the contemporary context of Korea. This writer would like to call it Kobaik kwa Mannam eui Shinhak (KM theology: the theology of Confession in socio-political context and Encounter with

¹ The understanding of the term "doing theology" is taken from the famous Latin American liberation theologian Jose Miguez Bonino's masterpiece Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). He uses the term in relation to both articulation and praxis.

religious and cultural context). Put simply, the new theology is an integration and supplementation of two frontier theologies in Korea. From the concrete and specific context of Korea, this way of doing theology will make a contribution to theology as well as to the pulpit.

In this chapter, the following subtitles will be examined: (1) the contemporary context of Korea, (2) the examination of a critical review of prevailing ways of doing theology in Korea, and (3) an alternative theology (or doing theology): KM theology. After this examination, this writer will suggest the implications for preaching.

The Theology

Contemporary Context of Korea as a Theological Background

Today Koreans are living in a very contradictory historical reality where God's will is violated in their daily lives. The world communities also have been dehumanized by oppression and suffering. Furthermore, the humaneness of spiritual existence in the image of God has been destroyed. In the theological sense, we Koreans are living in what Robert Brown calls a Kairos, which means "a time of opportunity demanding a response."² The following factors have caused these results and the crisis of the Korean context, as well as the global context: (1) the destruction of the integrity of creation, (2) the international power struggle, (3) the

² Robert McAfee Brown, Kairos: Three Prophetic Challenges to the Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 3.

division of Korea into South and North, and (4) the profusion of Western culture and technology in the Korean context.³

First, there has been a destruction of the integrity of creation. The tragedy of the political, economic, and military orders of nation states has resulted in a subordination of humanity to power based upon a highly mechanized and individualistic value system. Under this tragedy, there have been struggles not only "between justice and injustice, between good and evil, and between life and death,"⁴ but also between the oppressed and oppressor, between the haves and the have-nots. Moreover, nationalism, which seeks its own self-interest, and selfish individualism, which denies cooperative relationships, also obstruct the creative progress of human society and the formation of world community. That is why Gustavo Gutierrez, a liberation theologian, writes that the dominated people, exploited social classes, despised races and marginalized cultures, are the

³ All these issues were raised before in one of the progressive churches in Korea. However, this writer will examine the same topics here again in order to analyze the contemporary context of Korea in a more effective way. See "The Fifth Document of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea," in Key Documents (Seoul: The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, General Assembly, 1989). These issues were also discussed in the meeting of the World Council of Churches in Seoul, from the 5th to 12th of March 1990. The subject of this meeting was "Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation" (JPIC).

⁴ See "Kairos Central America," in Brown, 93.

result of this destruction of human integrity.⁵

Exploitation and destruction of nature, ecological crises, human greed and destruction of human solidarity are in this historical reality. Particularly, in the Korean context, this loss of creation, which is contrasted with the will or images of the creator, has existed since the industrialization and urbanization of the 1960s.⁶

⁵ Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973), xxi.

⁶ For example, during the drastic changes during the twenty years of the industrialization process, this process has been guided and evaluated on the basis of the concepts of economic growth and GNP increase. By placing such emphasis on these quantitative indicators, the GNP has in fact risen, but at the same time there was rapid multiplication of social problems. The fruits of economic growth were one-sided, leading to the over expansion of the Chaebol (powerful business group), the strengthening of the monopoly structure, and concentration of economic powers in Seoul, while the welfare and human rights of the majority of Minjung remain neglected. Thus there has been an increasing need for a new conceptual framework of social justice so as to establish the direction of our social development and to evaluate this development. Specifically, as the following table demonstrates, the concentration of economic power in Korea shows a contradiction relating to the problem of the haves and the have-nots.

<u>Concentration of Economic Power by Chaebols</u>						
(Manufacturing Sector, by Volume of Sales, 1985)						
Chaebol	Volume of Sales	Employment	Added Value	Fixed Assets	Companies belong to the	Chaebol
the upper 5	23.3	10.1	19.1	20.8		94
the upper 10	30.5	12.2	24.8	28.4		146
the upper 15	34.3	14.9	28.1	32.2		189
the upper 20	36.9	16.1	30.3	34.8		215
the upper 25	38.9	17.1	32.2	37.4		241
the upper 30	40.7	18.1	34.0	40.3		269

Source: KDI (Korea Development Institution), (unit: %, number), as cited in Social Justice Indicators in Korea (Seoul: Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, 1987), 16.

Remarkably, the Korean economic system has been controlled by

Second, in today's international society, the solidarity of the human community is being destroyed by power struggles. These struggles are happening among powerful nations which idolize the imperial, military, and neo-colonial powers. During the past centuries, the web of an unjust relationship of domination and subordination has prevailed. Enrique Dussel points out a phenomena of newly emerging subordination:

The so-called assistance of "capital and technology" (which worked against the capital and the technology of the poor and backward national capitalism of the periphery) did not produce "development," but only implanted the "transnational corporations," thus accelerating the extraction of wealth (in economic terms, "profit"; in theological terms, "life" and "blood" -- the life and blood of the poor peoples, the life and blood of the workers) from the periphery.⁷

This neo-colonialism, the technological and capitalist domination by the advanced industrial nations, has caused the violation and tragedy against God's will, which is the principle of justice.

In today's historical reality, the technological, capital, political, and cultural domination cannot be claimed to be a just world community and rational world order. One can say that today's international society has been polarized into extremes of wealthy and poor nations, extremes of powerful and weak nations, extremes of dominant and

a small number of Chaebols and huge business groups, each composed of many companies.

⁷ Enrique Dussel, Ethics and Community, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988) 237.

subordinated nations. All these extremes violate the justice of God's will.

There needs to be a change in today's human society toward an interdependent relationship based on the principle of reciprocity and justice in political, economic, and cultural realms. Regarding these needs, we must listen to a classic scholar's voice of the late nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill: "Justice and reciprocity in its broadest sense requires attention to fairness . . . equality, and utility."⁸ This voice calls on us to think about our unjust structures and systems in the world.

Third, in the narrow scope of the Korean context, Koreans cannot forget the reality of the North and South division. In order to understand this reality, a brief look at the record concerning the Korean War is necessary.

The immediate results of the Korean War are difficult to quantify. Over three million Koreans are estimated to have died in the conflict, with UN casualties at 370,000 and Chinese estimates running over 1.5 million. Estimates of economic damage recorded in the first year alone reached nearly two billion dollars in the South and 420 billion Won in the North. With irrigation works damaged, dams destroyed, and most towns, villages, buildings and industries leveled by 97,000 tons of intensive bombing and 7.8 million gallons of napalm, mainly in the North, by the US air force, the peninsula was literally a smoking ruin when the War came to its official end. In addition, due to the number of refugees who flooded the South, there was an enormous destabilization on the social and economic

⁸ John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 77-78, as quoted in Karen Lebacqz, Six Theories of Justice (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 31.

structures.⁹

This statement demonstrates sufficiently the horror of the Korean War in 1950. However, at present, Koreans must realize and confess responsibility, above all, for division. And Koreans also must see other nations' neo-colonialistic ruling tactics for their self-interests, in relation to the tragedy of the division. The actual responsibility for the division is rooted in the greed, arrogance, and power struggle of the nations which attempted world domination following the Second World War. Koreans must realize clearly that the division is a violation of Korean sovereignty. Above all, Koreans must not leave off the initiative to overcome the division caused by other nations.¹⁰ The reconciliation and reunification must be accomplished by the Korean people's support, wisdom, and strong will for peace and justice.

Finally, the virtues of Korean culture have become dominated by technology and the Western idea of individuality. Even though our culture includes exclusive dimensions such as the patriarchal principle, there still was not a worldly commercial culture, individualistic selfish culture until recently. There was only a culture of mutual help and humane virtue as a unique expression of Korean culture. In the

⁹ Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, Lost Victory, 12.

¹⁰ Kyu Tae Son, "Pyongwhareul Weiha Tongileui Shinhak" [The unification theology for the peace], Kidokkyosasang [Christian thought], Jan. 1990, 48.

contemporary Korean context, however, Western technology has rapidly opened up new avenues of Westernization, such as the media and computer systems. Accordingly, Korean culture is being ignored or decimated. This is also part of the concrete situation of Korea, the Kairos.

An Examination of a Critical Review of Frontier Ways
of Doing Theology in the Korean Context

In the book, Models of Contextual Theology, Stephen Bevans emphasizes that theology must be attempted in order "to understand Christian faith in terms of particular contexts."¹¹ As he stresses, in order to create a way of effective theology, the inseparable relationship between theology and its context must always be recognized. This recognition can be a preparation for doing a new way of theology. To suggest an alternative theology, KM theology (the theology of confession and encounter), three existing types of doing theology will be illustrated: (1) Western forms, (2) encounter forms, and (3) confessing forms.¹²

First, there is a type of doing theology which works in Western forms. This is a very colonial way of doing theology in the Asian and Korean context. According to John England, an Asian theologian in Hong Kong, this type of theology can be distinguished by at least three patterns:

- (1) Prefabricated and Colonial Method: A universal validity for Western formulation which are imposed

¹¹ Bevans, 1.

¹² See England, "Source for Asian Theology," 206.

as prefabricated models, upon Asian situations. This remains a colonial pattern, content with reprinting or translations of supposedly normative texts. (2) Asia Studies the West: Often academic in form, these writings analyze or interpret the thought of Western philosophers and theologians. Only sometimes are these made starting-points for comparative studies. (3) Asian Garments for Theology: The content in this category is still fundamentally Western, but there is the attempt to express this in local terminology, using "Asian illustration and color."¹³

England's classification is a very accurate one. The indicated ways of doing theology in the Asian context have prevailed, not only in the broad scope of Asian context but also specifically in the Korean context. However, all these ways of doing theology are very separable from the concrete contextual issues of our experience and daily lives. Put simply, all these ways of doing theology have been separated from our concrete lives and experience.

The second type of doing theology is encounter forms¹⁴ between Christianity and the religious cultural tradition. Tohakwha theology belongs in this group. This type of doing theology is somewhat different from Minjung and Liberation theology because of their indifference to socio-political

¹³ England, "Source for Asian Theology," 206. In order to support the assertion, some examples are: (1) the recent translation of Western theologians and earlier translations of Classic theologians' writing into Korean; (2) the studies of Western theologians, for instance, the studies of Barth or Brunner by the Korean Barthians or other scholars; and (3) some preachers in the Korean Pentecostalism, especially, Yonggi Cho and Ki Dong Kim.

¹⁴ England, "Source for Asian Theology," 206.

affairs. According to England, three types of doing theology can be distinguished:

- (1) The Earlier Attempt: Major aspects of a particular culture or religious tradition are studied in relationship to Christian understanding.
- (2) More recently Accommodation / Acculturation: Serious study of Asian tradition here led to an adaptation of received doctrines, and even to an attempted synthesis on certain levels.
- (3) Dialogue as Mutual Exploration: The significant difference here is that the historical and religious experience of a particular people is respected and received, and creative Christian response is made in dialogue with that experience.¹⁵

Finally, there is an another type of doing theology, confessing forms. This type includes elements of Minjung and Liberation theology. For this type of doing theology, the mission workers, the local churches, and the people under particular conditions have told story through their various experiences to the theologians for doing confessing theology. For example, the mission workers informed the Minjung theologians about the story of the laborer's suffering and the mission story of the Christian Communities in terms of the mission workers' engagement in concrete issues. In terms of this information, Minjung theologians could engage in the study of particular peoples, situations, and communities.

However, all the above types of doing theology have very exclusive attitudes and categories according to their own

¹⁵ England, "Source for Asian Theology," 206. The representative Tochakwha theologians doing theology belong in these groups. For instance, Tongshik Ryu's and Sung Bum Yun's methods belong in the first category of theology, however, not only Sun Hwan Pyun's theology but also Tongshik Ryu's theology belong in the second and third categories also.

concerns. Thus, these ways of doing theology create a polarity between the encounter and confessing forms. While theologians in the circle of Tohakwha theology were discussing their concerns about cultural and interreligious dialogue with an indifference toward the socio-political situation of the context, the theologians in confessing theology were concentrating their concerns on the socio-political dimension. In the end, all these types of doing theology resulted in exclusiveness and tension, especially between the two different ways of doing theology.

An Alternative Way of Doing Theology:
Kobaik kwa Mannam eui Shinhak

Liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo says, "The enduring contribution of liberation theology is not a new content to Christian faith, but a new method for understanding it."¹⁶ As Segundo indicates, there must be a different method of doing theology, such as KM theology, because of the lack of a proper method in Korea.

One of the many challenges of a new method, particularly for liberation theologies, is thinking of a way of doing theology in connection to the relationship between theory and "praxis." From this liberation perspective, an alternative type of doing theology can be taught which begins with the

¹⁶ Juan Luis Segundo, Liberation of Theology, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), 40.

idea of "praxis."¹⁷

Many traditional churches and classic theologians maintain that "praxis comes from the faith (theory)."¹⁸ This understanding holds that the theoretical formulation of the faith must be first, then praxis. However, many Liberation theologians emphasize that theory and praxis are inseparable because theology itself is "praxis with reflection."

Concerning the way of praxis, Koreans, above all, must learn at least three theological assumptions from Latin American Liberation theology. First, for doing theology, the central reality remains the one God who is judging, restoring, suffering, delivering, transforming all humans and creatures, all words, all life.¹⁹ Second, theology is then primarily the discernment of the reality of who does those things in our midst. Its task is not only the "accumulation of knowledge

¹⁷ Lebacqz, 101. Here, this writer wants to clarify the meaning of "praxis." First of all, Dussel states that "praxis" or "practice" means many things in our daily life. According to him, "praxis is actual, here-and-now manner of our being in our world before another person," and "praxis" is the relationship between two or more persons." In a word, "praxis" is human action addressed to another person. See Dussel, 8. Deane William Ferm also says more broadly but clearly that "praxis is continuing interaction between practice and theory, doing thinking." See Ferm, Contemporary American Theologies (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 63.

¹⁸ Min, 40.

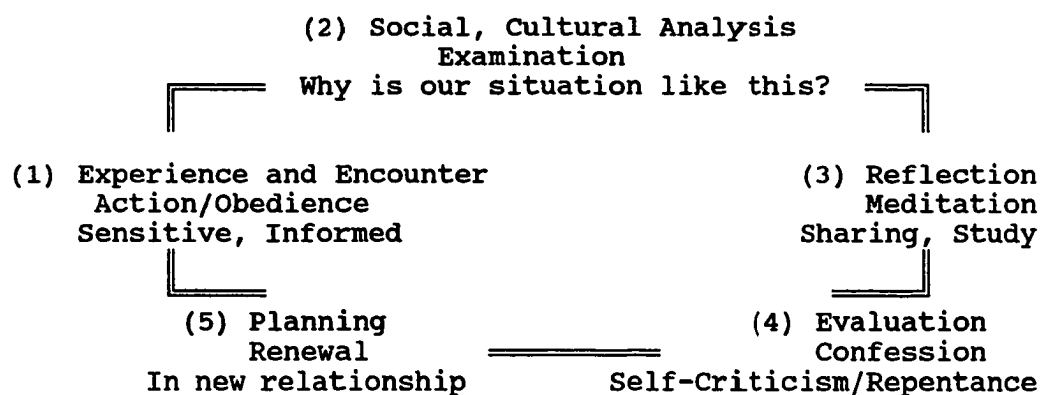
¹⁹ Rebecca S. Chopp, The Praxis of Suffering (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986), 3-4, 82-99.

but also perception and participation."²⁰ Finally, the sources for doing theology are co-extensive with life itself -- all human experience, history, and religious life.

In order to apply these assumptions to Korean theology, Koreans must use many sources for doing theology in the Korean and Asian context which portrays ordinary peoples being condemned to live in suffering, dehumanization, and poverty in our context, along with a rich culture and tradition of various religions. On the basis of this point, an alternative way of doing theology can be a combination, KM theology, of the confession (Minjung theology and Liberation theology) and the encounter (Tochakwha theology) forms of the existing Korean theologies. As many Minjung theologians, such as Nam Dong Suh, Byung Mu Ahn, and Younghak Hyun, indicate, the proper way of doing theology cannot be separated from the socio-political situation of the Korean context. And, as many Tochakwha theologians emphasize, the proper way of doing theology in the Korean context must be in light of five thousand years of traditional culture and religious ethos. Put simply, therefore, the alternative type must be an integration and supplementation of these two existing theologies. This new theology must begin by praxis from the Korean's condition of suffering and injustice. From this view, the new type of doing theology must be formulated by the

²⁰ Juan Luis Segundo, "The Hermeneutic Circle," in Third World Liberation Theologies, ed. Deane William Fernald (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986), 65.

process as the following diagram illustrates:²¹



In accordance with the above diagram, the several steps can be explained as follows: The first step in the diagram is the process of experience and encounter with the cultural information. This is a way of praxis. This step comes from the ordinary people's actual life situation as well as their life story in various different conditions and cultural backgrounds. The second step is a process of social analysis. This analysis examines in terms of socio-scientific approaches, such as Latin American Liberation theology does. In addition, in order to have an effective examination, it also must be reviewed from the Korean Minjung's perspectives. The Minjung's socio-political as well as cultural perspective is an important tool in examining the existing contextual situation. The third step necessarily brings the process of

²¹ The basic idea comes from England's diagram. However, this writer modified it considering the Korean cultural and socio-political context. See England, "Doing Theology in Asia," East Asia Journal of Theology 3 (1985): 192.

reflection. After examining the situation by socio-scientific approaches and throughout the historical lesson or reflection of the Korean Minjung's socio-political as well as cultural and religious history, the process of reflection must follow. Reflection can be done by meditating, studying the Bible or other religion, sharing the people's experiences, listening to the proper Minjungs' folk stories, and so on. The fourth step is the process of evaluation and confession. For evaluation and confession, self-criticism and repentance from the experience and encounter with the specific context are absolutely necessary. The final step is renewal (transformation) within a new relationship, and making a new plan. This is the process of recovering the humanity and the integrity of God's creation. The sequence is not so important, but in any living theology such elements should be present.

Each step of the diagram includes all contextual resources, which Koreans have in social, political, religious, and cultural dimensions. This writer believes that this method of doing theology helps to pursue a living theology. This method of doing theology plays an act as the theology of confession and the encounter with the Korean tradition.

To sum up, an alternative Korean theology must consider the Korean contextual situation in terms of an awareness of socio-scientific and multireligious approaches. This way of doing theology will cover not only the socio-political and contemporary economic dimensions but also the dimension of

five thousand years of cultural and religious history in Korea.

Implication for New Preaching

As discussed in the previous section, indeed, Korean theology must be a living theology, a participating theology, and a contextual theology for the people of the contemporary Korean context. As a concrete contextual theology, this theology also should not be separated from the pulpit. Rather, theology must be a faithful tool for the theological act of the pulpit.

In general, to have a good sermon, many homiletic scholars and preachers emphasize only the importance of the text and its method of exegesis. In other words, many famous homiletic scholars put much of their attention on the relationship between the sermon and exegesis of the text. Smith notes,

Homileticians and preachers alike are concerned with such things as how sacred texts function in the life of community, how texts are interpreted, how text have evolved in meaning and interpretation in the life of the church, and how the literary and distinctive qualities of texts function in the liturgical and religious life of a people.²²

However, not only the text but also the world of the preacher and the world of the larger social context is very important. If preachers ignore the social locations of their religious communities and the condition of the particular social and cultural context, the sermon will be a very superficial

²² Smith, 1.

sophisticated instruction from a religious text. If preachers also separate their sermons from the concrete issues of their living context, the sermon then will be a "homiletical heresy."²³ Therefore, "particular issues, social systems, pervasive values, and theological understandings" must be preached in terms of participation and praxis.²⁴

Regarding the issues, social systems, and values of the Korean context, KM theology does not lead the preacher's theological act through the speculative method, but through participating and praxis from inside the context. The experience of involvement and praxis with social problems provides a direct method of social analysis for preachers as a theological craft. Preachers who are willing to be socially discerning, as a sociologist, can be taught by this way of doing theology.

KM theology requires preaching to be prophetic, just as the preaching of Minjung theology is prophetic, because theology makes the preachers participate with the one God who is judging, restoring, suffering, delivering, transforming all humans and creatures, all worlds, all life. Thus, in the sermon, preachers must discern the reality of suffering and oppression which requires to be transformed.

Even though preachers often face obstacles and pressures,

²³ Clyde E. Fant, Preaching for Today (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1975), 32. Here, Fant uses this expression to stress the importance of the preachers' "cultural emphasis."

²⁴ Smith, 1.

prophetic preachers, must boldly proclaim the historical reality from the midst of suffering and oppression. The issues of suffering, exploitation, oppression, and dehumanization must be explored by this prophetic preaching. Historical Korean evil, such as demonic power and injustice must be named in detail by this prophetic preaching. Preachers also must try to discern historical reality as sociologists do. This is indeed a preacher's theological act. The prophet destabilizes the present system for the privileged few by proclaiming an alternative truth about the reign of God where justice and peace prevail.

The preaching of KM theology, in addition to being prophetic, is also topical. According to Ronald Allen in Preaching the Topical Sermon, "Given the occasional nature of the topical sermon the preacher needs to let the windows of consciousness be open to [concrete and specific issues of] the world."²⁵ Therefore, concerning the presented issues of the Korean context, the preaching of KM theology must be concerned with the issues of: (1) the destruction of the integrity of creation: an element of global and contextual issues; (2) human nature as egotism, endless greed, desire for power and arrogant unbelief as well as collective egoism, neo-colonialism, and power struggle; (3) the division between North and South of Korea which needs to be overcome by the independent will of the Korean people,

²⁵ Allen, 19.

particularly those who are willing to truly remain in the faith; and (4) the profusion of Western neo-colonialistic culture.

Finally, the preaching of KM theology needs to open up a dialogue with the indigenous culture and religions. In terms of dialogue, preachers of KM theology can use the content of dialogue for their preaching and communications from the rich cultural and traditional resources of Korea. This way of communication, of course, can always be personal, particular, historical, creational, incarnational, and liberating. Not only the contemporary stories but also folk-culture and literature can be used for effective sermons. The following distinct patterns of folk literature can be used for sermons:

traditional myth and legends; tales still told, songs still sung, poetry recited; riddles, tabus, proverbs, chants, laments, admonitions; traditional thought-form, symbols; naming, codes; today's folk songs; social parables.²⁶

²⁶ John England, "Folk-Literature and Culture as Source for Theology," East Asia Journal of Theology 3 (1985): 259, 273. The following literatures, particularly for English translations, are recommended by England. Corrections have been made by this writer for some of England's sources: Duk-soon Chang, ed., The Folk-Treasury of Korea-Source in Myth, Legend and Folktale (Seoul: Society of Korea Oral Literature, 1970); In Sop Chong, Folktales from Korea (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969); Tae Hung Ha, Korea Sings: Folk and Popular Music and Lyrics (Seoul: Yonsei Univ. Press, 1958); Im Pang, Korean Folk-Tales: Imps, Ghosts and Fairies (Tokyo: Turtle, 1963); Won Koh, trans., Contemporary Korean Poetry (Iowa: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1970); Peter Kim, ed., Flowers of Fire (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1974); David R. McCann, ed., Black Crane: An Anthology of Korean Literature, 2 vols. (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. China - Japan Program, 1977-80), Phil Marshall, ed., Listening to Korea (New York: Praeger, 1973); and Zong-il

Indeed, in order to be good at communicative preaching, preachers must learn effective communicable materials from traditional and indigenous religions.

In terms of a dialogue, Christianity must encounter other religions where the listeners are not only inside the church but also outside the church. Thus, not only Korean Christians but also people in other religions can try to sweep away the religious political prejudices of the Western concept of God. After all, Korean Christians need to be fully Korean as well as fully Christian. The preaching of KM theology must be addressed to the people not just inside the church but the people in the "full scope of the Kingdom of God."²⁷

Soh, Folk-Tales from Korea (Seoul: Hollym, 1970). In addition, this writer also recommends the following book: Yongjun Park, ed., Traditional Tales of Old Korea (Seoul: Hangul Munhwa Pub., 1974).

²⁷ Thomas Franklin O'Meara, Theology of Ministry (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 26.

Sample Sermon 1:
God Prefers People of Suffering²⁸
(Acts 8:26-39)

The Christianity in my family began from my grandmother in the early 1900s. When my grandmother married into a very strict Confucian family which belonged to the upper class in Korea, she was only sixteen years old. It was a time of living by the principles of Confucianism in the Korean context. Before she married into her husband's family, she had never seen her husband before. The process of the marriage was completed without her opinion. When my grandmother became a member of her husband's family, she had to live under the more strict principles of Confucianism because her husband's family required her to live in the atmosphere of strict Confucianism. Confucius dictated several rules: "Before marriage, obey your father; after marriage, obey your husband; in the event of your husband's death, obey your son."

Despite having these difficulties, she followed well the tradition and atmosphere of the new family. She lived harder and harder. However, after almost three years of marriage, she began to feel oppressed by her husband and her family. The reason for the oppression was that she could not get

²⁸ This sermon was delivered by this writer for the course, "Preaching and Worship Practicum," School of Theology at Claremont, Calif., 9 March 1994.

pregnant. This reason was very serious, and against strict Confucianism. It was an acceptable reason to expel a woman from the family because it was one of the seven vices of woman: "Failure to obey the parents-in-law; failure to produce male offspring; lustfulness; jealousy; contracting a serious malady; garrulity; and stealing."

She began to live in suffering because of the family's pressure. Even though she was in a higher class family than before, her life was miserable. Her raised status was in vain. Even though she had wanted to be a member of a rich and upper class family, it was not a happier life than her old life. Finally, she began to seek some solution to her problem. The way was through the Gut which was a Shamanistic religious ceremony. She went to see a Mudang, which is a Shaman. Often the Mudang came to her house for special religious ceremonies. She wanted to bring all her troubles and illnesses (hers and her husband's) to the Mudang so that she could find relief from her pain. However, her efforts were in vain. After several years, she still had not become pregnant.

When she became desperate, she had a chance to meet a missionary (mission woman or female evangelist) from the city to her local town. In that place, she heard for the first time about the content of the Bible as well as Christian doctrine. Particularly, during the Scripture lesson, she was very impressed by the stories of the Old Testament.

Specifically, the story of Hannah (1 Sam. 1: the birth and consecration of Samuel) moved her deeply. She thought that the struggle of Hannah seemed to be her story and that the suffering of Hannah was her painful suffering. The story of the Bible gave her inspiration. Finally, from her suffering situation she became the first Christian of my family and became a witness in my family.

My grandmother's story provides insight for understanding the story today, Philip's mission to the Ethiopian eunuch. I would like for us first to pay attention to Philip as well as to the Eunuch in their contextual situation of mission. Let's think about them a little more carefully, particularly their identities and their living conditions.

The eunuch was a special person. He was a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was the person who took care of all of the queen's treasure and had some special privileges in his court life. However, he had a very miserable handicap which caused him suffering. He was a eunuch. Even though he was a wealthy court official, he was in pain. He was not able to have his own offspring, and he was not able to make his own happy life with a family because of his abnormal physical condition.

The eunuch had converted to Judaism and had come to Jerusalem to worship. He seemed to seek comfort through religion and worship. Even though he was a gentile and black, unlike Jews, he intended to replace his mental emptiness with

Judaism. In spite of his social position in his country as the queen's treasurer, in spite of his having a lot of privileges, and in spite of his worship in Jerusalem, he was always a religious outsider living like a Samaritan in a twilight zone between Judaism and Paganism.

In the whole book of Acts, Philip is described as a very faithful servant of God -- he received the gift of the Holy Spirit, traveled in the Hellenistic world, and contributed to the expansion of the mission of the church through his preaching. His mission work focusing on the Samaritans was memorable. He was open to the guidance of God, and he took the opportunity to talk about Jesus whom he had experienced. He was also able to interpret the Old Testament, and he always made Jesus the center of his interpretation.

Philip was directed by the Holy Spirit to travel from Jerusalem to the desert area of Gaza. When he arrived in Gaza, he met a eunuch from Ethiopia. Here, Philip's mission work to the eunuch was to begin.

The eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship and was returning to Ethiopia. While on the way, he was reading the Scripture aloud, especially the book of Isaiah. In this moment, he met Philip. He was joined by Philip in his chariot. Here, as a person who was in pain without any satisfaction, as a person who was in suffering, as a person who was an outsider of the religion, Judaism, he began to have a conversation with Philip.

Despite being a converted member of Judaism, despite having the privilege of worshiping in Jerusalem, and despite having the privilege of reading the Scripture aloud, the eunuch was not able to understand the content of the Scripture. His reading of the Scripture was just a formal and superficial reading without any comprehension.

He always was anxious to know the book of Isaiah about "a sheep led to the slaughter." When he met Philip, he, of course, had been struggling with this passage again and again. He raised a question to Philip immediately about the meaning of this slaughter. He was very glad to hear Philip's initial words to him about the passage. The eunuch thought that Philip knew the Scripture well due to Judaism. He was right. Philip knew exactly what "a sheep to the slaughter" meant.

The eunuch was not able to know what the sheep to the slaughter meant and why the person of Isaiah 53 had to suffer. Obviously, this was a story about someone's painful life and suffering. The eunuch, above all, wanted to know who this person was and why the person had to suffer.

He finally found an answer through his conversation with Philip. This question was his ultimate anxiety throughout his religious life. Philip was able to explain about the Scripture, because he also had sought a solution to his previous ignorance about this story through his own experience of "Jesus." As one of seven chosen deacons like Stephen, Philip understood the story of the suffering servant in Isaiah

53:7 as symbolic of Jesus' suffering and dying. Furthermore, Philip himself experienced the suffering of religious persecution by people in Roman Empire. There were serious tensions politically between the early churches and the Roman Empire. Philip had already experienced desperation, despair, and harassment.

Returning to the story, we see that the eunuch has been baptized. He rejoiced at his baptism. This eunuch was baptized in the name of somebody who suffered like himself. It was Jesus. Finally the eunuch himself, like Philip, confesses and desires to proclaim the Gospel about Jesus who was suffered. I am sure that he became a witness to all people who did not know Jesus, or who misunderstood Jesus, and those who suffered, especially under persecution. On the whole, we can hear the message today that the suffering person, the eunuch, became a witness of our savior Jesus who suffered and sacrificed, by a person who also experienced suffering, Philip. This great providence by God took place among people who were suffering and in despair and hopelessness. Indeed, what a grace of God! Indeed, what a preference of God! Come and see! God's grace appeared in the context of suffering. Doesn't God side with those who suffer? Isn't God working among people who suffer?

I am attending a Korean church located in downtown Los Angeles. Due to the church's location, our congregation has trouble with the many homeless people around the church. Most

people in the church have already become tired of these homeless people because they can be bothersome.

However, I have a white female homeless friend in my church. She attends my church as a member of our congregation. About ten months ago, she came to our church for the first time during the Sunday worship service, and she caused a big controversy in our congregation about whether we should accept her attendance in our worship or not. Our congregation was divided on the issue. Some people asserted that we have to kick her out from the church because she might influence many homeless people around the church to come as well. Others suggested that we must let her attend the worship service at least because she seemed to come for the worship service and the congregational lunch. Finally, we concluded that we might accept her participation in the worship service.

Even though she is homeless and has a little mental problem, she contributes in some degree to our congregation at the present. She teaches English to the Sunday school students every Sunday afternoon for one hour. The students are just beginning their lives in this country. One day she told me that she was born in Florida and raised in that place as an adopted daughter. When she graduated from college, she got her first job at a bank. She was around twenty-five years old. She really worked diligently and had enough financial resources. However, after several failed marriages, the

result was that she became addicted to drugs, and the addiction caused a little mental problem. About two years ago, she visited Korea herself and taught English there for a while, but she was not able to stay there because of her visa status. This was about eleven months ago. After returning to her life in this country, she became homeless because she had no shelter, no money, and no family. Furthermore, after trouble with her social worker, she was not able to receive the minimum financial support through the social welfare office. Finally, when she saw the sign of a Korean church on the street, she was pretty glad to see it because she thought in her mind that Korean people are warmhearted and have a benevolent mentality.

Now she leaves all her possessions in the church building and stays at a Catholic sister's house temporarily. But I believe that God's preference of suffering people will be shown again on this woman in her suffering. God has done the work through particular people in suffering above all.

I don't believe that she is the only person suffering. Today our world is suffering. I believe that we are truly living in a contradictory historical reality, where God's will is being violated in our daily lives, and our world communities are being dehumanized by oppression and suffering.

In our global context, there has been a destruction of the integrity of creation. There has been the tragedy of the socio, economic, political, and military orders of nation

states. The historical reality of our world is suffering. The integrity of creation is violated by human greed and the subordination of humanity to power based upon the highly mechanized and individualistic world value system. Nationalism and Multi National Corporations seek their own self-interest and selfish individualism, denying interdependent and cooperative relationships. Thus, gaps between the South and North, the East and West, the rich and the poor, and the white and the people of color obstruct the creative progress of human society and the formation of a world community. In this evil reality, God's people, especially in the third world countries, are certainly suffering. The integrity of creation is broken by the oppression of one another. Thus, the people of the world are suffering. Can anybody deny the reality of this suffering?

The suffering is caused by imperialistic oppression and exploitation; it is because of human greed, destruction of nature, and destruction of human solidarity. The Nationalism of powerful nations, the perception of supremacy of the white race and white civilization, and white chauvinism cause certain suffering in the web of an unjust relationship of domination and subordination. Thus, all we are in suffering from the exclusion of supremacy.

Today we listen to the message that God prefers people in suffering. Here we have a hope. Here is the message of salvation! We believe that God will spread God's providence

(preferential option) for the people of suffering. The fulfillment of the mission will be achieved among the people in suffering above all.

Are you suffering because of your life situation? Do you feel despair because of your mental and physical condition? Do you feel hopeless because of contradictory social values and systems? If you feel that you are in suffering, do not be in despair; do not be hopeless; do not be desperate. God loves you first of all, and God wants to do something through you and your suffering.

Instead, be a witness. We have already heard hope through the revelation of Jesus in his suffering and resurrection. We learned God's preferential option through the salvation of people's souls. We took the message through the salvation of the body through living out the beliefs of faith, hope and love, involving humanity, nature and history of all oppression and injustice. Our present suffering will bring freedom and liberation and participation in God's grace because our almighty God prefers us rather than those who oppress us. Listen to what Jesus says to us. He says "[I] have sent [you] to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce the time has come when the Lord will save the Lord's people." (Luke 4:18)

God, Master of our lives.

We thank you, praise you, and confess you as our Lord.

Thank you for your preferential option for suffering people.

Thank you for your work among people who are suffering.

Keep us within your hand in this world of suffering.

Make us within your almighty power to be your instruments in this world of suffering.

Amen!

Sample Sermon 2:

The Prophet against the Priest²⁹

Korean Christianity is about one hundred years old. There are two divisions within Korean Christianity which sharply contrasts denominationally and theologically. The most pivotal issue concerns social justice and involvement in it. From this standpoint, we Korean Christians are divided into conservatives and progressives. This distinction has become deeper particularly because of the Korean contextual situation during the past several decades.

Politically, the 1960s to the early 1980s was a dark period in Korean history. There have been well-known dictators from the military. They dominated the entire political field with their military power. The result of the situation was the violation of human rights and dignity. The peoples' lives in this time were filled with suffering and misery. At the time, most Korean people began to realize the worth of freedom again since the imperial invasion of Japan during the 1940s. Through this situation, some Korean Christians and churches decided that the time had come for the realization of the church's social obligation as an importance of strong faith.

²⁹ This sermon was delivered by this writer at the event, "It's Preaching Time," sponsored by the Pan-African Seminarians Association, at the Kresge Chapel, School of Theology at Claremont, Calif., 14 Nov. 1994.

They prepared and became involved in movements against dictatorship. They confessed their faith as the disciples of Jesus the Messiah, who lived and dwelt among the oppressed, poverty stricken, and sick in Judea. They boldly confronted the dictators as Jesus confronted Pontius Pilate, a representative of the Roman Empire. They were sacrificed while witnessing to freedom, as Jesus did.

What we need to pay attention to is that this movement was supported by many progressive churches and their prophetic leaders. The leaders, particularly in the member churches of the Korean National Council of Churches, preached prophetic sermons against the dark socio-political situation. They also issued critical statements urging the military government to hand over political power to civilians.

However, there was another contrasting voice which criticized these prophetic leaders. The conservative churches and their leaders opposed the progressive churches and their leaders' agitation toward the socio-political movements. Most of the leaders of larger congregations and their members seemed to keep the status quo and had a good partnership between the ministers' group and the power of the military government. They would support the military government and their dictatorship. They asserted that they would promote "anti-Communism" with the military government. The conservative leaders increased the anxiety of the people by emphasizing the possibility of another war. They stressed to

the churches that relief from this anxiety comes from doing the internal work and paying attention to the expansion of church membership through visible missions. Therefore, the church must not have socio-political concerns as a holy community and God's holy church.

During the dictatorship, these church leaders supported the dictatorship and represented other ecclesiastical authorities. They sponsored a politico-religious partnership of conservative evangelization in the South Korean Army. Moreover, their famous "Presidential Prayer Breakfast" sustained the strong partnership between the conservative and the dictatorship modeled after those of President Nixon, and the Billy Graham Crusade of 1973 in the U.S.A.

The past Korean contextual history provides an insight for understanding the story for today, the confrontation between the priest Amaziah and the prophet Amos. Let's think about the priest Amaziah's and the prophet Amos' contextual situation, particularly focusing on their individual status around the power of the royal court.

The story today tells us that the priest Amaziah was the chief priest of the royal sanctuary in Bethel, the center of politics as well as a religious pilgrimage. Amaziah is the cultic person in charge of the royal sanctuary. He maintains his status as the royal priest by the power of the royal court. The priest and the king, Jeroboam, during this time have a very close partnership. As a priest of the royal

court, he never expects to have any challenges to the rules of the present hierarchical structure. He always wants to keep the status quo as much as possible without any social concern.

However, he is now annoyed by an unwelcome radical agitator, Amos, who is disturbing the good order of the peaceful and imperial realm of the king. In the whole book of Amos, the prophet Amos is a relatively shabby person to Amaziah. His social background is clearly poorer than the priest Amaziah. He is a charismatic prophet of God. He was never trained through an institutionalized process; he never went to the prophet school; he never attended the School of Theology at Claremont. He is an illiterate compared to a cultic person in charge of the royal sanctuary. His former career was just a farmer and shepherd in the countryside near Tekoa (a military outpost village about 10 miles South of Jerusalem). There he had grown up and had made a good living by raising sheep.

However, one day, he heard the calling to be a prophet from Yahweh because the nation and its people were in crisis. Even though he was ignorant, unlike the royal cultic person, he felt the need to prophesy for the people of God and the nation in crisis. This call encouraged him to prophesy against the decadent socio-political situation and the corrupted religious structure.

Amaziah is troubled by the sudden awkward visitor, Amos, who had intruded. Amos is an interloper violating all the

rules of hierarchical procedure. He never hesitates to speak about socio-political issues as well as religious issues. His prophecy seems very sincere and relevant to the issues of the nation. Furthermore, he accuses the priests in Bethel of non-sensitivity about social concerns. He boldly criticizes the priests as maids of the political power. Amaziah, finally, decides to expel Amos because of Amos' bold prophesy about broader concerns. First of all, he accuses Amos to the king of being a radical agitator who is disturbing the good order of the peaceful imperial realm. "Almighty king! Amos says that you shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from the country." It is the first attempt to get rid of Amos. However, the king, Jeroboam does not respond because the king was actually only concerned about sensual pleasure, having little regard for the nation and the people.

Under Jeroboam's leadership, the nation seems to be enjoying prosperity. It is a time of great optimism. However, in spite of the healthy appearance, the kingdom is in an advanced state of decay, socially, morally, and religiously. The religious leaders seem to have capitulated completely and abdicated their offices in favor of formalism and selfishness.

Disappointed by his first failure, Amaziah confronts Amos directly to get himself back to Judah, to make his living there by his prophecy, and to disturb no longer the tranquility of Bethel. Amaziah portrays Amos as a dangerous

man to Israelite authorities because Amos speaks a boldly different prophecy about the social responsibility of religion and its leaders. However, Amaziah as the chief priest, is not interested in socio-political aspects, but in the internal work with individual interests.

Here, Amos finally responds to the professional and formalistic prophet as a flatterer of the political power, "Dear hypocritical prophet, fear God; fear Yahweh! Do not be a flatterer anymore! Do not be a maid of the power in order to keep your vested interests! Do not use the power! Do not use the prestige of the king to silence the disturbing prophet! Fear God and speak the prophecy in your honesty; how the nation is in crisis, how does the nation need accurate prophecy? What prophecy can wake the nation up from this crisis?"

He goes on, "Even though I was not a prophet nor a prophet's son, God called me to speak the oracles for the nation, God called me to speak the oracle for the people of God! -- because of your false prophecy, because of your role as hypocritical priests, because of the prophecy in your formalism, because of the prophecy in your superficial manner!"

"I, Amos as God's prophet ask you to hear Yahweh's voice fearfully: do not prophesy against Israel! and do not preach against the house of Isaac -- if you continue to do this, your wife shall become a prostitute in the decadent city; and your

sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword of the armies in Assyria; and your land shall be parceled out by line due to the aggression of Assyria; you yourself shall die in an unclean land, corrupted land, and defeated land; and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land!"

When people come to other language societies as adults, they expect to have a hard time learning the language as second language. It really takes time, and requires tremendous efforts. Even for those who spent half of their life time in this society, they are still struggling with the nervous feeling of speaking in English in front of native speakers. Despite learning the second language for a long time, the people always recognize their limits in speaking English as a second language.

Here, at the School of Theology, people who speak English as a first language easily forget the others' serious bottlenecks. Thus, they sometimes cause some regretful mistakes. For example, they frequently judge the person's intellectual ability, knowledge, and humanity by the extent of their ability to speak English.

One day, my close Korean friend and I had a serious conversation about this fact. During the dialogue, he finally began to confess his difficulties here, especially in class participation; he said that he frequently was not able to understand the content of discussion in class; he also often was not able to express his opinion in class because of his

lack of language skill. Thus, the only way of his life in school has been just keeping silence for the last two years; he continue to say that he sometimes has to pretend that he understands the lectures or discussions. Because he does not want to make the people in the class uncomfortable.

After his lament, I raised the question, "What basically made you do that?" He responded to me very shortly that it was because of the structural atmosphere of the class -- when he speaks so slowly in the class, or when he raises questions in terms of his poor communication skills, then he always has some guilty feelings himself because many native speakers in the class seem to have an annoyed look or the sense of superiority without patience. Thus, his keeping silence is somewhat of a compromise in himself with the existing class atmosphere, but not the way of renovation and transformation of the atmosphere.

"An annoyed look [?] the sense of superiority without patience [?]" After having this dialogue, I encourage him to be a prophet like God's chosen prophet in the midst of existing difficulties. I recommended that he say, "I am sorry that I can't speak English freely, but would you please be patient with other's difficulty? We oriental people take more time to speak because we do not speak immediately whatever we think; it takes more time to rethink before we speak!"

I don't think that honest speaking and confession is easy

to speak. Albeit, it is not easy to speak directly for a proposal even in our small community. Moreover, it is not easy to speak a prophecy, as the curse and oaths, priestly judgements, and oracles against a huge power or the institutional system. However, it is not surprising that Amos was never reluctant to speak against the power and system of the royal priest Amaziah, because of his courage and boldness as God's chosen prophet. The prophet requires this boldness and courage.

There are analogies to this story in the world context today. Our internal and external society have a complex power structure. In this structure, some Christians and their leaders have a lack of boldness. They compromise their task with the institutional power; they hesitate to be a prophet for the people and society of the world. They marginalize themselves as holy Christians only inside of the church, not the world. They make a separation between church and society. However, we Christians cannot deny that our life is fundamentally determined by the dynamic relationship between political, economic, and cultural spheres. Therefore, Christians and their leaders must have open prophetic attitude toward the church as well as the world; they must have a boldness to criticize the church as well as the power to be a prophet. The prophet does not seek their task by compromising with the power structures.

As social beings, the religious lifestyle of the human

community must be continually judged and transformed through the principles of justice, love, peace, the integrity of creation, and God's prophetic mission. As Christians and leaders, we have to undertake the role of the prophet for the individual in the church as well as people in society.

The basic foundation of this fact is Jesus Christ's absolute example of his life. He shows the way of prophetic life through the social transformation of the community and society by prophecy and social mission. He never hesitates in his cruel prophecy against the vested people like the Pharisees and Scribes. Even as he dwelt among the powerless, oppressed, poverty stricken, his prophecy against the power and institutional evil was courageous and boldly convincing. He shows to the world that prophecy is part of religious life.

His role of prophet was not only for individual salvation, but also it was inseparable from the society. The salvation of an individual without liberation from unjust social structures and system is unchristian and impossible. Individual salvation and salvation of the society are like the two sides of a coin. The prophet's social concern is always necessary in the dimension of both church and society; without true salvation of an individual, the society cannot be saved; without the society's salvation, the individual cannot be saved; without the salvation of the society, church cannot be saved; without the salvation of the church, society cannot be saved. That is why the task of the prophet is not only inside

the church but also society in the world.

The more society and people in the world face crisis, the more there need to be a bold prophet. The more the society and community is being corrupted, the more there needs to be a courageous prophet. The more the false priests compromise their task to the power structures, the more there needs to be a corrective criticism from the prophet. The more the society and institutional power are more proud of their existence than that of Yahweh, the more the prophet and Christianity must be free for the transformation of the evil system.

Now look at the church! Look at the society in the world! Isn't it the time of crisis in need of the prophet? Isn't it time for corrective criticism? In our church and society, the solidarity of the human community is being destroyed by oppressive power and systemic evil. The individual and society idolize outdated imperialistic and militaristic power. The institutional false priests disturb the prophetic voices for the people in suffering and sorrow in the world. Totalitarian states in the third countries of the right and left still prohibit free speech and punish critics as criminals. This is certainly the time for a prophet like Amos.

Are you ready to be the prophet against power and the evil institutional system? Are you courageous enough to have the prophetic vocation for the crisis of the world? Are you prepared to be the prophet in confrontation with the maids of

power and the institutional system? If you say "Amen," listen to the voice of the Lord: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon [you], because the Lord has chosen [you] to bring good news to the oppressed, the suffering and the poor [in the world]." (Luke 4:16).

Most compassionate God,

We confess to you our faith, we give you our life, and we bring you our vocation.

Lead us to be your servant against the decayed power and corrupted society.

Help us to be your prophet in the confrontation with the power and evil systems.

Make us to be your almighty power in order to criticize boldly against social evil and hypocritical leaders in the world.

Amen!

CHAPTER 6

Summary and Conclusion

Throughout the history of theology, many well known theologians have repeatedly emphasized that preaching (and also ministry) is a theological act and have pointed out that good preaching is a good theological act. Indeed, the emphasis should be a lesson for Korean preachers and pastors.

In the current Korean contextual situation, many preachers and pastors maintain that preaching is often nothing more than delivery in terms of eisegesis, proof-texting, and allegorization. They also often separate preaching and theology. As a result, preachers never engage in a theological act with even the issues of their lives of suffering. They maintain that the delivery of the text or Shimbang (visiting congregation members' residences) is the only reasonable way of ministry without having concern for the issues of the problematic social and structural society. Moreover, many preachers and ministers regard themselves just as administrators for the management of the institutional church system. In other words, they consider that ministry itself has the same function as that of management, whether in large or small commercial companies and carry out mechanical and administrative duties. This attitude leads to a failure of the realization of the most important element of ministry,

as well as to a failure of creating effective preaching. Put simply, many Korean preachers and pastors still remain idle spectators even in view of the urgent social issues of the community or society.

Fortunately, some Korean prophetic (progressive) preachers and pastors have begun to engage in a theological act in terms of learning good methods from two existing frontier theologies, Minjung and Tochakwha theology. In spite of weaknesses and limitations, Minjung theology still provides a lesson to the preachers to have concern about the socio-political realm. Tochakwha theology also provides a lesson to the preachers to be concerned with good communicative skills learned through the existing elements of Korean cultural and religious traditions. Tochakwha theology also requests the opening up of a religious dialogue.

From the structural oppression, alienation, and oppression of the socio-political system, Minjung theology accurately provides a valuable lesson for the socio-political approaches. On the other hand, in light of the rich and fertile land of culture and religion, Tochakwha theology provides a lesson in getting rid of the exclusiveness of religious political prejudices of imperialistic attitudes.

However, with the many social and contextual issues of Korea, a more thorough consideration is required to do effective theological acts in this context. One may easily feel that the existing frontier theologies are not enough to

do an effective theological act due to their exclusive polarity. Their limitations call for a more appropriate way of doing theology in order to address the complicated structural issues of society and system. Finally, as many frontier theologies and the third world theologies have been replaced by more effective ways of doing theology, the Korean theology should be replaced by a more integrated way of doing theology.

As an alternative Korean theology, a theology of integration and supplementation of two Korean frontier theologies, KM theology, was presented in Chapter 5 in this project. In a word, this writer asserts that theology should begin from the concept of praxis. In fact, any contextual theology should not be articulated based on a speculative method, only on praxis. This praxis is inseparable from the issues of the context and brings an interaction between practice and reflection in the midst of the Korean context. For KM theology, the central reality remains only the one God who is judging, restoring, and transforming the historical reality of human worlds and creatures. This way of doing theology is not just an accumulation of knowledge but a participation in a concrete human experience, history, and religious life of the rich cultural and religious context of Korea.

A direct experience of the socio-political context as well as an encounter with five thousand years of cultural and

religious historical contexts is demanded for an effective theology. An examination of socio-scientific approaches such as Minjung, Liberation, and Tochakwha theologies is demanded for an alternative theology. In terms of this approach, self-criticism and repentance based on experience and encounter are absolutely necessary to make a transformation and renewal of lives. After all, KM theology is a possible alternative way of doing theology because it considers the Korean contextual situation more effectively in terms of an awareness of the socio-political, scientific, and multireligious approaches.

Since the radical theological movements of the 1960s such as secular theology and death-of-God theology, many new theologies have emerged. However, theologies of the new "white dominant Western world" or theologies of the "Third World" are not proper as moderate contextual theologies for Korea. This demonstrates that the most moderate theology must be a result of the direct expressions and experiences of the Korean Minjungs' suffering, exploitation, oppression, and alienation. The KM theology is a vindication of not only the socio-political but also the cultural dimensions of the people of Korea.

KM theology refuses to adapt the way of a speculative method but welcomes an engagement with the real contemporary Korean context. Bevans summarizes well the characteristics of this theology: it is "the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of particular historical events, intellectual

currents, cultural shift, and political forces."¹

In conclusion, as a paradigm of theology of preaching, KM theology will result in a proper contextual preaching in terms of the preacher's theological act. Preachers are also expected to pay attention to the Korean social and cultural context as working theologians. The preacher should not be a spectator but a direct participant in the issues of the Korean context. Therefore, they should "weep, confess, and resist"² with the community and people in terms of having solidarity against a historical evil reality. By weeping, confessing, and resisting, the preachers will be able to cover all creatures' affairs in the Kingdom of God via creative theological action. Only in this way can preachers be working theologians and preaching can be a theological act.

¹ Bevans, 5.

² Smith, 6.

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